

THE
Sole and Soberaign Way
OF
ENGLAND'S
being saved,
Humbly. proposed

By R. P. Minister of the Gospel.

Robert Perrot — of Dean, Bedfordshire,
ejected for Nonconformity — see Memorial T. 2d.

O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wicked-
ness, that thou may'st be saved; how long shall
thy vain thoughts lodg within thee? Jer. 4. 14.

— In his favour is life. Psal. 30. 5.

Pœnitentia amara est quidem ad tolerandum, saluber-
rima autem ad convalescendum. Bern. in Serm. de verbis
Sapiens.

Ut malorum omnium hæc causa est, quod Deus offen-
sus faciem abscondit, ita plena salus ab unico favore
ejusdem, est expectanda. Moller.

LONDON,

Printed by W. G. and are to be sold by J. Han-
cock, at the three Bibles in Popes-head Alley,
N. Ponder at the Peacock in Chancery-lane,
and W. Adderton, at the three Falcons in Duck-
lane. 1671.





TO
The Right Worshipful
Sir THOMAS ALSTON,
Baronet.

Much Honoured SIR,



THE Treatise here ensuing,
being calculated, not one-
ly for the *weal* of greater
Communities, as Nations,
Cities, Towns, but also of
lesser Societies, as Families, yea and par-
ticular persons: In tenders of my ser-
vice to your Self, and your so worthily
Honoured Lady, I make bold here, what
it is, to present it: and the rather, be-
cause it pleases the Lord, by a distemper,
which so often renews its onsets upon
you, to give you so frequent *memento's*
of that Turn, which *Moses* declares to
be the inevitable fate of all indefinitely.
*Thou turnest man to destruction, and say-
est, return ye children of men.* Thus we

Psal. 90. 3.

(* 2)

run

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Comparat cur-
sum vitæ no-
stræ gyro. &c.
Calv. in loc.

run here a short round, and soon come to our races end; fetch but a turn, as it were, and then return back again. Now may the Lord be pleas'd so to sanctifie those frequent *memento's* of your bodies *turn to destruction*, as to advance more and more thereby that happy *turn of conversion*, here treated of, and so thereby bring you more and more under the *shines of his face*, and *comfortable displayes*, and *refreshing beams of his favour*. I have often thought, and sometimes upon occasion declar'd, that how ever things appear to common sense, yet certainly that is best for us here, *that state, that condition, those dispensations*, be they what they will, though never so afflicting, that are most effectual, and have the fairest and most essential influence, as to the advancing of our spiritual good here, and our eternal happiness hereafter; that is best for us in our *way*, and where we take up onely for a while, that doth advantage us most at our *journeys end*, and where we must stay and abide by it for ever; that, not which pleases us best for a moment, but profits us most for ever, *for things are here, and are*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

are so to be counted of here, as they relate to eternity, and as to what is spiritual and everlasting, which being the main and chief, and that which is of greatest concern, is in every thing to be the rule of the rest. And because afflictions many times are most conducing here, hence the Lord is pleas'd often to afflict those most here, which he intends most good to hereafter. And truly let our present condition be what it will here, if the Lord does but please to mould it for our eternal weal hereafter, it is an act of infinite mercy. Lord, lance here, fear here (*cry'd Austin*) so thou spare but hereafter; so truly it matters not much what God does with us here, so he spare but hereafter. And by what he does with us, or to us here, does but the more fit us, and the better mould us for himself, and glory hereafter. How many are happy in being seemingly miserable, while others are miserable in being seemingly happy? because their seeming happiness hinders their real; for having no changes, therefore they fear not God: so that to live still in prosperity, as is said of Nabal, and not to experience those changes

Domine hinc
ure, hic seca,
modò in æter-
num parcas.

Feliciter in-
felices, infe-
liciter felices.

Psal. 55. 19.

1 Sam. 25. 6.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Pfal. 73. 5.

Difficile est in
honore esse si-
ne tumore, in
prælatione sine
elatione, in
dignitate sine
vanitate. *Berz.*
Pfal. 30. 5.

Jer. 48. 11.

Non immuta-
vit habitatio-
nem, non fuit
tedibus suis
pulsus, &c. nul-
lam adversita-
tem expertus
est. *Theodoret.*
in locum.

v. 26. 29.

*changes as others do, nor be in those trou-
bles as others are, as is said of the foolish
and the wicked, is no such desirable
state, as many deem, but dangerous. It
is said of our Edward the fourth, Never
lived Prince whom adversity more harde-
ned to action, nor prosperity softened to
voluptuousness. Edward the sixth was
wont to say, No danger to the godly, unless
by wealth & prosperity. And we see David
himself, though a man after God's own
heart, yet in his prosperity he grew se-
cure. It is said of Moab, He hath been
at ease from his youth, and he hath settled
on his lees, and hath not been emptied from
vessel to vessel; neither hath he gone into
captivity, that is, he hath not been hur-
ried up and down from place to place,
as Israel was, &c. and what follows?
therefore his taste remained in him, and
his sent is not changed: his pride, impie-
ty, and impurity still continued: for it
is said, he magnified himself against the
Lord, and we have heard of the pride of
Moab, &c. Even as Wines not being
drawn off their lees, and put into other
vessels, are not meliorated, but retain
their first taste and sent. So we read of
others,*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

others, who being settled on their lees, Zeph. 1. 12.
and not being emptied from vessel to vessel,
they say in their hearts, *The Lord will not*
do good, neither will he do evil, that is,
they grew stark Atheists, boldly scorn
God and men, deny God's providence,
and make as if he was a very Idol, and
regarded not, nor took notice of the af-
fairs of men; and others, because *God*
kept silence, and did not punish them, Pf. 50. 21.
they thought *God such a one as themselves.*

Now certainly, it was better our lives
were made up of nothing but changes,
than to come to such a pass, and not to
have our souls blest and enrich'd with so
great a good, as the fear of God, which
is said to be *the treasure of Kings,* and If. 33. 6.
which the Lord hath declar'd to man
from heaven *to be his wisdom,* and which, Job 28. 28.
issuing forth into obedience to God's
commandements, *Solomon,* the wisest
King that ever was, and one inspir'd by
God, hath concluded, and left upon re-
cord, *to be the whole and all of man.* Let Ecclef. 12. 13.
us hear the conclusion of the whole matter,
Fear God and keep his commandements,
for this is the whole duty of man. It is in
the Hebrew onely, *this all man,* that is, quia hoc omnis
homo, vel hoc
omne, homo
est.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

as it may be rendered, this is all man, or all this is man, man indeed, and this only is truly and properly man, that which speaks man indeed. And without this, man *at his best state*, as to the very quintessence, and greatest confluence of all other things, *is but altogether vanity*. And this was that which King David his father, when he was to dye, left him in charge for to do, as whereby to shew himself a man, which he therefore the rather commends unto others: Now the days of David drew nigh, that he should dye, and he charged Solomon his Son, saying; *I go the way of all the earth, be thou strong therefore, and shew thy self a man*: and how must he do it? And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, &c. And we can never indeed shew our selves men, unless we do this, but are as brutes. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, i.e. so as to fear God, and depart from evill, which is the onely true wisdom and understanding, is like the beasts that perish. And God is said to tread down such as dirt, and to put them all away as dross, *yea to take them*

Psal. 39. 5.

1 King. 2. 1, 2, 3

וְיָנִי & eris
in virum, i.e.
præsta, te vi-
rum. Pisc.

Psalm. 49. 20.

— 119. 118,
20.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

them away as dung, till it be all gone, ^{1 King. 4. 10.}
though never so great, but the godly he
hath set apart, as persons of honour for ^{Psal. 4. 2, 3.}
himself, to be for his honour, and high
and excellent uses here, and then to be
happy in and with himself for ever here-
after. And O that the Grandees and
great ones of the world would at length
know, and be thoroughly convinc'd of
this! that this is man, and this is true
greatness, and grandeur indeed, To fear
God, and keep his commandments, to pay
to him, who is their maker, owner, and
benefactor, all due observance; to look
upon the study and glory of God as the
importantest employment, and accord-
ingly to give up themselves to it; to
have honourable apprehensions, and highest
estimations of him, strongest affections
towards him, and wholly to devote and
dedicate themselves to him; to have the
very drift, aim, and bent of their lives
for God and his glory, and heaven and
salvation; so to serve, honour, and please
God here, as to come to enjoy him for
ever hereafter. And as for the honours
and profits of the world, and the sensu-
al pleasures and delights of the flesh, to
contemn

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Nemo dignus
nomine homi-
nis, qui unum
diem velit esse
in voluptate.

Tullius.

Major sum, &
ad majora na-
tus, quam ut
mancipium sim
corporis mei.

Seneca.

O amici mei
perdidi diem,
&c.

contemn them, and the rather, when that a very heathen could say, that he *deserv'd not the name of a Man, that would wast but one day in pleasure; and another, that he was greater, and born to greater things, than to be his bodie's bond-slave.* And when *Titus the Emperour*, though a Pagan, sitting on a time in company, could cry out, *O my friends, I have lost a day, in regard he had spent it without doing some good. To think that book worthiest reading, which is of God's own inditing, and which King Alphonfus is said, notwithstanding all his other employments, to spare time to read fourty times over, and that with Comments and Glosses; and which Queen Elizabeth, after her Coronation, being presented with, receiv'd with both hands, and kissing it said, that it had ever been her chiefest delight, and that it was a book she would often and often read over. To be looking, not so much to the things which are seen, for they are temporal, but the things not seen, for they are eternal, and to give them the pre-eminence; to be thinking where you shall be thousands of years hence; and after*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

after your fluctuating condition for a few moments here, what must be your standing and eternal estate for ever hereafter. To judg, that but for the *concerns of Gods glory*, and *your soul's* here, and the fruition of that future good hereafter, it was not worth the while to *have been born*. To have the resolves of your hearts continually to *obey God*, and their desires to *enjoy him*; not onely to *know* what is virtuous, but to *be virtuous*, the actual possession of one virtue being preferable to the bare speculative knowledg of all. The more God honours and does for you, the more to honour and do for him, and not to be like those great persons and wits, who unmindful of that 1 Cor. 4. 7. are (as an Honourable person expresses it) *like those ungrateful clouds, that obscure the Sun that rais'd them*; and so do they the glory of that God, who advanc'd them to that height: but to resemble and be like those *winged Cherubims* in the Tabernacle, whom (as the same Honourable person expresses it) *all the Gold and Jewels that glittered about, and all the clouds of incense that fum'd before*

The Honourable
Robert Boyle.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

before them, could never divert from a fixt posture towards the *Ark of the Testimony*, which contain'd the *law* and the *mercy seat*. So to be still *eyeing of God*, and to have your whole life nothing else as it were, but a continual *attendance upon him*, and a *converse with him*, and having made him your portion, to devote all you have, and are, to him and his service; and as you receive more than others from him, so to work more for him. It was an excellent speech to this purpose, that of *Henry the Great*, King of *France*, and favour'd much of true *grandeur*, and nobleness of spirit indeed: When I was born (says he) there were thousands of others born besides, *what have I done for God more than they?* and so that of *King James*, in his book dedicated to *Prince Henry*, that he would have him remember, that *he differ'd not in stuff, but in use from the rest of the people*, and that by God's ordinance, *Kings* as well as others were bound to read the *Scriptures*. This is now the true *grandeur*, and that which *exalts* great ones indeed, and renders them the *glory and delight of the places* where

The Epistle Dedicatory.

where they live ; as is said of *Titus*, before mentioned; that for his virtues, and his sweet and prudent government, he was stiled the *delight of mankind*; and his *Motto* was, *All the world falls in love with a good Prince*. It is said of King *Edgar*, that he was a man indeed but of little stature, but his excellent virtues stiled him *honor & delicia Anglorum, honor & rosa Regum, Anglici orbis flos & decus, &c.* And the love and favour of Religion made our *Edward the sixth*, to be called another *Josias*, and occasioned that lugubrious *Epicede* at his death.

Deliciae humani generis. Princeps bonus, orbis amator.

—*Vester corrui omnis honos.*

*Nam Regum decus, & juvenum, flos spesq;
bonorum,*

Deliciae seculi, & gloria gentis erat.

Dignus Apollineis lachrymis, &c.

Although Gold (as one well observes) comes from the earth, none despises it ; and though dross and rust comes from the Gold, none regards it : the virtuous coming from mean parentage are honourable, and the vicious from noble, are contemptible. The very Heathens had

Tota licet veteres, &c.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

—Nobilitas
sola est atque
unica virtus.
Funeal.

Ἀρχὴ ἀρίστη
τῶν ὄντων
ἀδελφὸς δὲ ἀ-
γαθῶν, ἐνσπ-
ρα.

Quid prodest
esse, quod esse
non prodest?

had such a notion of virtue, as being the onely true Nobility ; it's Virtue, not Escutcheons ; grace, not race or place, that truly ennobles : and how much more then piety, called in sacred Writ, the *glory of God*, *Rom. 3. 23. the life of God*, *Eph. 4. 18. the divine nature*, *2 Pet. 1. 4.* and what indeed is *Godliness*, but *God-likeness*, a *sparkle* as it were of the *divine nature*, a *ray* of the very *glory of God himself*, a *sacred and heavenly impress of God* upon the soul, framing it and the whole man to live *according to God*. It is the souls application of it self to God, as its *end*, and in its *actings* as its *exemplar* ; a following of God, and bringing of a man to be *after his own heart* ; and therefore as God is the *best of Beings*, piety must needs be the *best of blessings* : and it is the presence or absence of this, which, as the main, makes a man indeed something or nothing, great or mean, honourable or vile, truly happy or miserable. What are glorious garments upon a dead carcass, sweet flowers upon a dead corps? and such are riches and honours, and learning without *religion*. And hence it is said of *Augustus*,
that

The Epistle Dedicatory.

that the name of *piety* was more esteemed of him, than the name of *power*; and this made *Bernard* to break forth into such high *encomia* of *piety*. O *piety*, glorious, admirable, what mind can think, what intellect can understand, what tongue can sufficiently and worthily extoll thee! O *shining pearl*, more bright than gold, more splendid than the Sun, a treasure above Gold, rendring man like unto Angels, yea God himself, the noblest thing under heaven, yea in heaven. And when this shall come to be the blessing of Nations, and what the Scriptures tend to convince of, great ones shall come to be convinced of too, and accordingly steer their course, viz. that we cannot be happy or wise, but by being good, nor avoid the greatest of *miseria*, but by avoiding of sin; then shall Nations be advanc'd, and lift up in true grandeur indeed, and then we may (as the forementioned Honourable person expresses it) expect to see indeed the golden Age elsewhere then in Poets dreams. And now that this may be more and more the blessing of You, and your family, and that its grandeur and glory, which

Gratius ei fuit nomen pietatis, quam potentis.

O religio gloriosa, mirabilis, quæ mens cogitare? quis intellectus plenè cognoscere, quæ lingua sufficienter, & dignè extollere te potest?

O Margarita præfulgida, rutilantior auro, splendidior Sole, tu thesaurus super aurum, Angelis & Deo hominem reddens conformem, res nobilissima sub cælo, in cælo. Sc. Bernard.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

which is the glory of heaven, of Angels, yea of God himself, and that all your changes, and daily experiences of your frailty and mortality, may be more and more influenc'd, to be subservient to the promoting of that which is *the whole and all of man*, as also that *all spiritual blessings* especially, may be more and more multiplied upon you and all yours, is and shall be the prayer of him who is

SIR,

*Your Worships, in all Christian
Observance, much obliged*

R. P.



The EPISTLE to the READER.

Courteous Reader,

THOU hast here held forth unto thee the
only sovereign way of England's weal,
 its proper Salve for all its Sores, and
 proper remedy for all its maladies; *Peccatum vul-*
 and this taken out of the Divine precepts of *nus, & pœni-*
 God's own Word, and therefore authentick, *tentia medi-*
 yea and experienc'd as very effectual, by many *na. Chryf.*
 proofs and *probatum est's* that are upon it: and
 let us therefore humbly and earnestly, without
 any further delay, (as the Church and people
 of God formerly) sollicit the great Physician
 of Nations to make application of it, and it will
 certainly do, it never having yet fail'd. We have
 try'd other ways and means, and have found
 them vain, and ineffectual; let us at length joint-
 ly and universally make an assay as to this. *Is*
there (says the Prophet Jeremy) no balm in Gi- Jer. 8. 22.
lead, is there no Physician there? why then is not
the health of the daughter of my people recover-
ed? Gilead was full of balm, and famous for
plenty of the best and most sovereign balsam
and ablest Physicians, but what are all if not
made use of? how should a people's hurt be hea-

(*)

led,

The Epistle to the Reader.

Conqueritur
quòd civitas
perseveraverit
in delicto, nec
pœnitentiam
recepit, non ta-
men non deef-
sent sacerdotes
& prœcepta le-
gis. Benignus
quidem Medi-
cus affert re-
media, illi verò
quæ suggere-
bat Medicus,
refruserunt.
*Theodoret. in
locum.*

Hof. 14. 1, 2.

Prov. 1. 23.

Luk 7. 30.

led, or health recovered, when the Physician is not made to ? nor the proper remedies made use of, but slighted, and neglected ? So that *Eng-land's* hurt is not at this day *heal'd*, and its *health recover'd*; it is not that there are not sufficient remedies in the Word of God, or that there is not a *God in Israel*, a Physician in Heaven; no, there are remedies in the Word of God so sovereign, as are able to recover the most decayed state to its pristine glory; and a *God in Israel*, a Physician in Heaven, skilful to heal, *mighty to save*; but if we would be *heal'd* and *recover'd*, we must then apply our selves to that great Physician, and make use of those remedies, as we are often invited and call'd upon to do. *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity, &c. and, Seek the Lord, and ye shall live: and, Turn you at my reproof:* but can we our selves? the Lord hath his answer ready, *Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you*, and that can and shall inable you, if you duly apply you selves to me; and shall we now reject *this counsel of God against our selves*, as is said of the *Pharisees*? God forbid. For what an heavy doom must we then expect, and how sad and woful must our end then needs be! and truly, as to happiness or misery, that is the main, and we are chiefly (as to that) what we are then, and not so much what we are at present: for what we are then, we are really, exceedingly, transcendently, unchangeably, everlastingly, and happiness or misery then is so indeed. And hence, that is brought
in

The Epistle to the Reader.

in as the great happiness of the upright man, that *his end is peace*, and so, as the great misery of the wicked, that they are at last *wholly and utterly cut off, or rooted out*; and hence is the Lord so earnest, that people would be *considerate* about their *latter end*, he is most solicitous about that, and so should we: *And what will ye do* (says he) *in the end thereof*? You think yourselves, it may be, well enough at present, but what will your condition be in the conclusion? And this Solomon urges to deter from whoredom, — *and thou mourn at the last, &c.* mourning then being mourning indeed, mourning as we say *with a witness*, exceeding great and bitter, and therefore the Hebrew is, *and thou roar at the last*; and so the Dutch, and Italian, and others read it, not onely sigh, or cry, but *roar*, and make a fearful noise or outcry, as a *Lion*, or the *Sea*, for the word properly signifies such a great noise or roaring that beasts, especially Lyons are wont to make, when hungry or in distress, or that the Sea makes, the roaring whereof is heard afar off, and is very terrible; or that the Devils make, who are said to *believe and tremble*; or roar or shriek terribly, as the Greek word signifies, it notes extreme horror. And such is the *mourning at last*, when the Adulterer is upon the wrack of an evil conscience, and sees Hell gaping for him, yea is as it were in the suburbs of it already, and now perceives, how that for a little brutish pleasure, he hath brought upon himself ten thousand times more sorrow, and nothing now abides

Pf. 37. 37. 38.
&c.

Deut. 32. 29.

Jer. 5. 31.

Prov. 5. 11.
&c.

Heb. in fire
tuo.

וּנְדָמָה
Et rugias in
novissimo tuo.
Pisc. Metapho-
ra à rugitu leo-
num, vel maris.

Jim. 2. 19.
oculorum hor-
rescent.

Non gemit
tantum, sed ita
vociferatur,
ut videatur
quodam modo
inferorum ve-
stibulum solu-
tisse. Cantor.

The Epistle to the Reader.

1 Sam. 2. 26.

Mr. Robert Col-
son.

him, but his wickedness, and the reward thereof; and dying impenitently in his sins, his sorrow is not onely fruitless, and unprofitable, but fearful, inutterable, unalterable, and for ever. And O that this was thought of in time, before it be too late! for as *Abner* said to *Joab*, *will it not be bitterness in the end?* and will not the pleasing streams of sensual delights, sinners are swimming down now, carry them into the dead Sea of eternal sorrows? And how great will those sorrows, and that bitterness be! And therefore such pleasures should be look'd at as *going*, and not as *coming*, for they leave horror and terror behind them. And what are sensual pleasures to an immortal, immaterial soul, the true life and happiness of which consists in godly actions, and the *fruition of God*, the chief good? But the pleasures of sin (says the sinner) are sweet, and so may poyson be made that kills presently, the sweet lusts and sports of sin convey death and hell in their pleasures, and there must be either a merciful time (as one expresses it) to find them bitter here, or a terrible time to find them so in hell. Do the damned find any pleasure in sin? and if drossy filthy lusts do so affect and please, what might more glorious objects do, if thou wert spiritual? It is a good *dilemma*, a Reverend Divine gives against the allurements to sin. *Either I must repent, and then it will bring more sorrow than the pleasure did good, though that is a blessed sorrow indeed, or not repent, and then it is the damnation of my soul.* So that there is no dealing with sin without

The Epistle to the Reader.

out hurt, no more than there is *handling of fire,*
or *treading upon hot coals* without being burnt.
Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his Cloaths Prov. 6. 27, 28.
not be burnt? can one go upon hot Coals, and his
feet not be burnt? It is observed of the Beaver,
that the hair of it is softer than the Down of
Feathers, but it is exceeding dangerous with its
teeth; for, as a Naturalist observes, it will gnaw
trees with its teeth, as if they were cut with
Axes, and if it chance to catch hold of any joynt
in man, it will not leave 'till it hath knapped the
bone asunder: and so sin, how delightful soever
it may seem to the sinner, being soft to the
touch, and pleasant to the tast, it gnaws the
conscience, and bites the soul as it were to the
bone. *Look not thou* (says Solomon) *upon the* Prov. 23. 31;
wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in 32.
the cup, when it moveth it self aright. At last it
biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder,
and as it is said of the strange woman, *her lips*
drop as an honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5.
than oyl, but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp
as a two-edged sword, her feet go down to death,
her steps take hold of hell. And will ever those
lusts compensate thy loss, or get thee what thou
lettest goe? no, thou mayst keep dross and
dung, but lovest and lettest go Gold, Diamonds,
and precious Pearls, &c. what then remains,
but that speedily and forthwith we hearken to
God's call and counsel, wherein we and the Na-
tion are so infinitely concern'd, viz. heartily
and industriously to set our selves, and frame
our doings to turn to the Lord; else if we shall
still

The Epistle to the Reader.

Prov. i. 24,
25. &c.

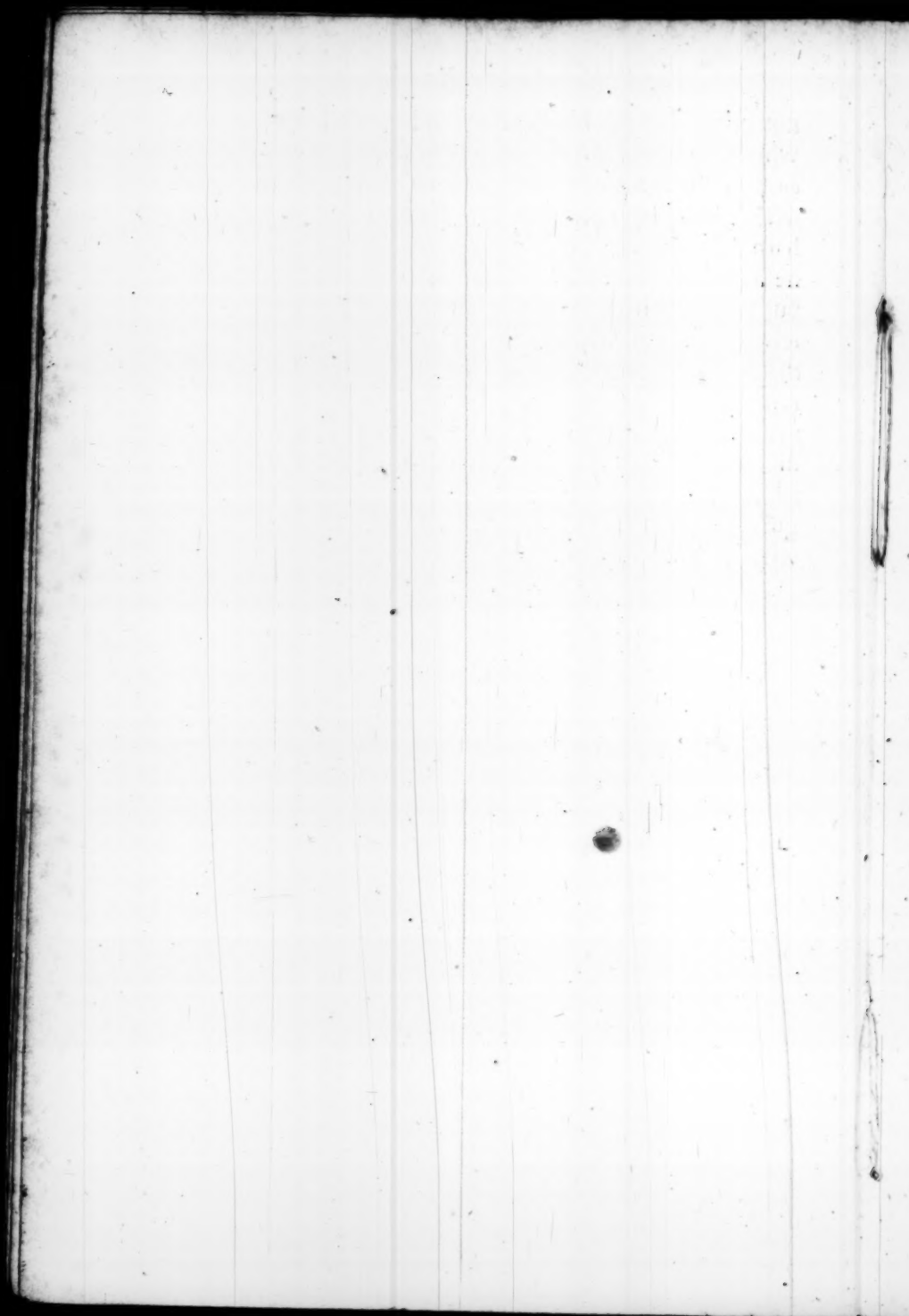
still refuse, what can we expect, but that our calamity will not onely be exceeding great, but that the Lord, as he threatens, *will laugh at it, and mock when our fear cometh, when our fear cometh as desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon us:* and that we should call, *but the Lord not answer, and seek him early, but not find him, because we would have none of his counsel, but despised all his reproof. &c.* But Repen^ance, this, may some say, is a trite Theme, a common subject, that which every one knows: it is so indeed as to its notion, and speculation, but how well would it be for England was it so as to its practice, and putting it in execution, it being the onely way *of its weal!* And let none here be offended at the plainness of the stile, this is no time for *jingling discourses*, neither does *silken language* sute with such days as call for being cloath'd with Sackcloth. *Conversion to God*, which is the great work, wherein England's weal is at this day so infinitely concern'd, is a serious thing, and requires greatest plainness, in those that offer any thing as to it; neither is it like to be effected, or carried on by *embroyder'd language*, or *fine finical phrases, or elegancies*; no, it is the plainest preaching that God hath ever most honoured, as to be instrumental to such a work; and the meaner sort being those, that such a discourse is like to have the most effect upon, such as offer thereto had need to apply themselves to their capacity: and whatever is the stile or language, know that the remedy it self here propos'd is
not

The Epistle to the Reader.

not mine, but of his making and prescribing,
who is the *great Physician, and healer of Nations*,
and he therefore that rejects or despises, *re-*
jects and despises not man but God; onely he 1 Thes. 4. 8.
hath spirited me, and bid and appointed me, as
he hath some others, to mind you of it, and to
put you speedily upon it, yea and to betake your
selves to him to help and assist you in it, that so
the Nation may not perish, and so soveraign a
remedy at hand, for want of being applied and
made use of: as unto which, if any thing here
dictated shall prove subservient, or any ways
adjutant, it shall ever be acknowledged as a sin-
gular mercy to him, from the God of mercies,
who is, and remains

*A studious well-wisher of Thine, and
the Nations weal,*

R. P.





To the Christian Reader.

Salvation is the most sutable, and the most desireable mercy for sinners, for sinful persons, for sinful Nations. Salvation, as it imports deliverance from evil, (and that it imports most properly) is a very great mercy; but as it implies the gift and injoyment of good, of the highest good, so it is far better. Temporal salvation is a signal favour, but how unspeakable a favour is Eternal! Now, as questionless, salvation, with all the appurtenances, and consequents of it, is the greatest mercy that can be desired, so the greatest question that can be asked, is that of the *Jaylour*, *Sirs*, what must we do to be saved? Reader, the worthy *Author* of the ensuing Discourse, having, I doubt not, well weighed, and deeply laid to heart, the doleful condition of many thousand souls in city and countrey, who remain in a state of sin, and persist impenitently in the practice even of the grossest sins, considering also with himself (possibly with others) the dangerous state of the whole Kingdom, by reason of those (much to be lamented) overflowing of sin, (he, I say, having laid to heart, and considered these things) hath studied, and in this Treatise freely held forth a remedy, indeed an unfailing, and the onely remedy, whereby the souls of men may be saved and delivered from wrath and damnation, and the whole Kingdom from

Acts 16. 31.

from ruine, destruction, and desolation. There
needs no more for the saving either of persons, or
Nations, but the Lords effectual turning of our
hearts from sin, by the working of his powerful
grace in us, and the sweet manifestations of his
favourable grace towards us, or (as the Authors
Text hath it) the causing of his face to shine
upon us. A remedy compounded of these two Gos-
pel-ingredients (both the fruits of Christ's blood
and death) for the cure and help of sin-sick dying
souls, and Kingdoms; thou wilt find (Christian
Reader) ready at hand, for thine and the King-
dom's benefit, in the doctrinal part of this book, if
thou hast an heart to make use of it. And that
thine heart may be drawn out, to make a right
use of it, thou wilt find it stor'd with many clear
directions to guide thee; with strong reasons to
convince thee, with many cogent motives to
quicken thee, all fetcht from, and grounded upon
the holy scriptures; many Texts whereof are
not onely (as they all are) pertinently alledged,
but solidly, pithily, and largely paraphrased and
expounded. I commend all to the blessing of God,
and thy diligent perusal, praying that all may
turn, not onely to thy souls profit, and everlasting
salvation, but to the temporal salvation of these
Kingdoms, from those impending evils of punish-
ment, which our abounding evils of sin threaten
us with, and may quickly bring down upon us, un-
less the Lord God of hosts (according to his
superabounding goodness) turn us again to him-
self, and cause his face to shine upon us; then,
and not till then, we shall indeed be saved, or
dwell

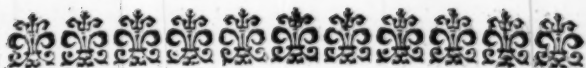
dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil.
 This (Christian Reader) is the apprehension,
 this the daily petition, of

Thy friend, and servant in the Lord,

JOSEPH CARYL: a famous Mem-
 orialist, & author of a Commentary on Job in 12
 vols. 4to. see N. Memorial I. 14b.

Good





Good Reader,

WE learn from the story of the Fall ;
that man was first a *fugitive* from
God , and then an *exile* ; first *A-*
dam ran to the *bushes*, and then God
drove him out of *Paradise* ; and ever since, be-
sides the *aversion* of mans own heart, there
lieth a *legal exclusion* on Gods part : Man in
this condition is become a *stranger* to God and
his own happiness, and not only a *stranger*, but
an *enemy* ; but though we are *enemies* to God ,
we cannot make good our quarrel against him,
the Lord of Hosts will be too hard for *poor*
worms : Alas ! what will our *many lusts* do a-
gainst his *mighty Angels* ? God cannot be o-
vercome, yet such is his Grace, he is ready to
be reconciled ; *Turn unto me saith the Lord of*
Hosts, and I will turn unto you saith the Lord of
Hosts. Zech. 1. 3. The same stile is used both
in the *exhortation* and the *promise*. 'Tis the
Lord of Hosts who inviteth us to turn to him,
by a *serious repentance*, and the *Lord of Hosts*
who promiseth to reward us with all manner
of *felicity* and *happiness* : If we turn not we
find him a *dreadful adversary* ; but if we
have an heart to return to him , we shall find
him as powerful and delightful a friend ; *Woe*
to him that striveth with his Maker : But blef-
sed he that submitteth to him. We keep off
from him out of *carnal liberty*, not liking the
strictness

strictness of his precepts; and also out of legal bondage, fearing the strokes of his justice; and we are hardened in our alienation from God by patching up a sorry happiness in the creature apart from him; our remedy must be fully correspondent with our disease, therefore our cure consists in turning from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness. Do this, and it shall be well with you: sin shall be pardon'd, and everlasting happiness shall be your portion: But who is sufficient for these things? The legal exclusion is taken off by the merit of the Lord Jesus, and the straying disposition is cured by the all powerful and converting grace of his Spirit; and in conversion we find him to be the Lord of Hosts, as well as in destruction, as he conquereth and subdueth mans heart to himself, for surely God never made a creature too hard for himself: But his grace must be sought after by us, in the use of all holy means; Gods complaint against his people was, that they would not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord; surely, they do the work of Christianity, who most labour in this very thing, especially in a time of general defection and corruption of manners, when a people temptingly and daringly put it to the tryal, whether God will be so severe against sinners as his word representeth him to be; in such a time we need cry aloud, both to God and men; to God, that he may turn us by his preventing grace, and turn to us by his rewarding grace; to men, that they may speedily recover themselves

selves by repentance, lest iniquity be their ruin.
 This is the design of the religious Author in
 this *useful* and *savoury Treatise*, which is now
 put into thy hands, as much of it as my occa-
 sions would give me leave to peruse, seemed to
 be woven with such a constant texture of *solidi-*
 dity and *piety*, that I could not but recommend
 it to thy acceptance, and the Lords Blessing.

Tho. Manton, D.D. a famous Dis-
senting, see N. Memorial I. 175. 6 2d

The



The Contents.

CHAP. I.

THE general scope, and summe of the words.

CHAP. II.

The explication of the words.

p. 5.

CHAP. III.

1. Doctr. in general. When miseries abide the people of God, spiritual mercies are especially to be sought. p. 10

Reas. 1. This the Lord prescribes, 2. thus others have done, 3. of the not doing thereof the Lord complains, 4. to this the promise is made, 5. else miseries cannot be remov'd in mercy, 6 these will support under them. II. 12

Use 1. of Reproof, 2. Exhortation. 15. 16

CHAP. IV.

2. Doctr. in general. Spiritual mercies are to be sought with all earnestness. 18

R. 1. God's precept, 2. others practice, 3. their nature requires it, 4. this it shews we are in earnest, 5. in a fit capacity to receive them, 6. because so unworthy of them, 7. because of the dear price paid for them, 8. this is all that is required for the obtaining of them, 9. the way to have them,

The Contents.

them, 10. the more to value them. p. 20. to 37

Use 1. How sad not to seek them at all. 1. It is the badge of wicked men, 2. such are practical Atheists, 3. as Heathens, 4. have not the Spirit, 5. are dead, 6. lye open to God's fury. p. 37. &c.

Use 2. To be humbled we have sought them no more, 2. to seek them more earnestly for the future. 1. For our selves, 2. for ours, 3. for others, especially for Sion. P. 40 to 49

CHAP. V.

The more particular points observable.

1. Doctr. We are all by nature turn'd away from God. Use 1. It speaks our sin, 2. misery, 3. necessity of being turn'd again if saved, &c.

p. 49 to 57

2. Doctr. Such as are brought home to God, are very ready to turn again aside. 1. How this appears, 2. whence it is. p. 57, 58. Use 1. to bewail it, 2. not to be high-minded, 3. to carry it meekly, 4. the more to endeavour to cleave to God: several helps propounded.

p. 59. to 66

3. Doctr. The Lord is the God of hosts. Use 1. to fear him, 2. not to provoke him, 3. to trust in him, 4. to be encouraged in our addresses to him, 5. to move us to turn to him, &c.

p. 56, 67

4. Doctr. The Lord onely can turn us again to himself. Use 1. It shews the folly of delaying to turn, 2. we should the more fear turning aside, 3. apply our selves to him to turn us, 4. give him the glory when turn'd.

68, 69

5. Doctr. When the Lord turns a people again, he causes his face to shine. 1. He does cause it to shine,

The Contents.

shine, 2. he will, it being 1. his promise, 2. sin which interpos'd, being remov'd. Use 1. Such then are blessed, 2. It should move the more to get turn'd.

p. 70 to 77

CHAP. VI.

The principal point.

p. 78

Doctr. 6. The onely way for a people to be saved, it is for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine. 77. This illustrated as being 1. the right way, 2. a sure way, 3. a try'd way, 4. the way to be sav'd in mercy, 5. universally, and that in three respects, 6. the onely way.

p. 78. to 88

CHAP. VII.

What manner of turn this must be, answered 1. more generally, 2. more particularly. 1. Such as is of God, 2. join'd with humiliation, 3. arising from faith, 4. accompanied with shame for sin, 5. confession, 6. hatred of sin, 7. such as is even to the Lord, 8. with all the heart, 9. universal, 1. as to the subject turning, 2. object turn'd from, 3. object turn'd to. 10. Constant and continued.

p. 92. to 114

CHAP. VIII.

The Reasons of the point. R. 1. Because this is the way these here take, 2. that others have taken, 3. that the Lord prescribes, 4. which as so, he hath promised, 5. th. & Christ took, 6. that his Ministers take, 7. because it presupposes faith, 8. because of what follows, 1. upon conversion, people being then turn'd, 1. from what is destru-

ctive,

The Contents.

Elive, 2. to God, 1. the chief, 2. the ultimate good, 3. they being then towards salvation, 4. they walk, 5. hold on in the ways of salvation, 6. such in some sense are sav'd already. 2. because of what follows upon God's favour, which 1. is salvation, 2. that which will accomplish all requisite to salvation, 3. it is it self all, 1. light, 2. life, 3. felicity, 4. safety, 5. health, 6. strength, 7. joy, 8. glory. 4. It silences all God hath against his people.

p. 114. to 139

CHAP. IX.

Use 1. of information or inference : if this be the onely way for a people to be sav'd,

1. There is then a way for a people to be sav'd.

p. 139

2. England then is in a very unlikely way to be sav'd.

143

3. The contrary then is the onely way to be destroy'd.

148

4. Few then are like to be sav'd.

153

5. It gives us to see the reason, why the Lord is so intent upon this.

155

6. Why his Ministers so much press this.

157

7. Why his people have been so earnest for this.

159

8. Why such joy in heaven for this.

160

9. What a choice mercy then the Ministry is.

161

10. It speaks highly of conversion, and divine favour.

167

11. Commends solemn days of fasting and humiliation.

166

12. Speaks well of afflictions.

168

A 2

CHAP:

The Contents.

CHAP. X.

Use of Exhortation, 1. earnestly to pray for these. Motives, 1. the Lord invites to it, 2. it is great kindness that he does so, 3. it is not for any need he has of us, 4. yea he indents with us to do it, 5. he onely can effect and vouchsafe these, 6. he is able to do it, and 7. willing to do it, 8. does it of free grace, 9. by his effectual grace, 10. hath done it for the greatest of sinners. p. 171. to 196

CHAP. XI.

The second branch of Exhortation, to adde to our Prayers our endeavours, in general, more particularly, 1. to attend constantly on the ministry of the word, 2. when the spirit moves to cherish such motions, 3. to break off from evil company, 4. to get into good, 5. to consider our ways, 6. to occasion our hearts that way, 7. to remember God of his promises, 8. to labour to believe, 9. to cease the practice of gross sins, 10. what we do to do speedily. Twelve Considerations to excite thereto. p. 196. to 233

Though we cannot convert our selves, yet not in vain to be exhorted thereto, shewed in several particulars.

234

CHAP. XII.

Motives to turn to God. 1. The equity thereof, 2. the excellency, 3. the utility, 4. the necessity, 5. the acceptableness of it to God, 6. the comfortableness,

The Contents.

tableness of it to our selves. p. 236. to 276

CHAP. XIII.

Further motives to turn to God: 'till we do this, 1. we forget our selves, 2. we are not our selves, 3. these are times of turning, 1. of sinful in regard of men, 2. judicial in regard of God. 4. Nothing less speaks us true Christians. Ten several things instanc'd in. 5. This all call for, 6. God counts upon, 7. want of this God's great complaint, 8. not turning when he smites, puts him upon greater severities, yea makes him resolve upon final ruine. p. 276. to 303

CHAP. XIV.

To incourage one another to turn to God p. 303. &c.

CHAP. XV:

To see to it, our turning to God be true and real. (309

CHAP. XVI.

To prove God therewith. 319, &c.

CHAP. XVII.

Motives to seek God's favour: 331. &c.
To consider 1. how excellent it is, 2. how honourable, 3. how comfortable, 4. how profitable, 5. how necessary.

CHAP.

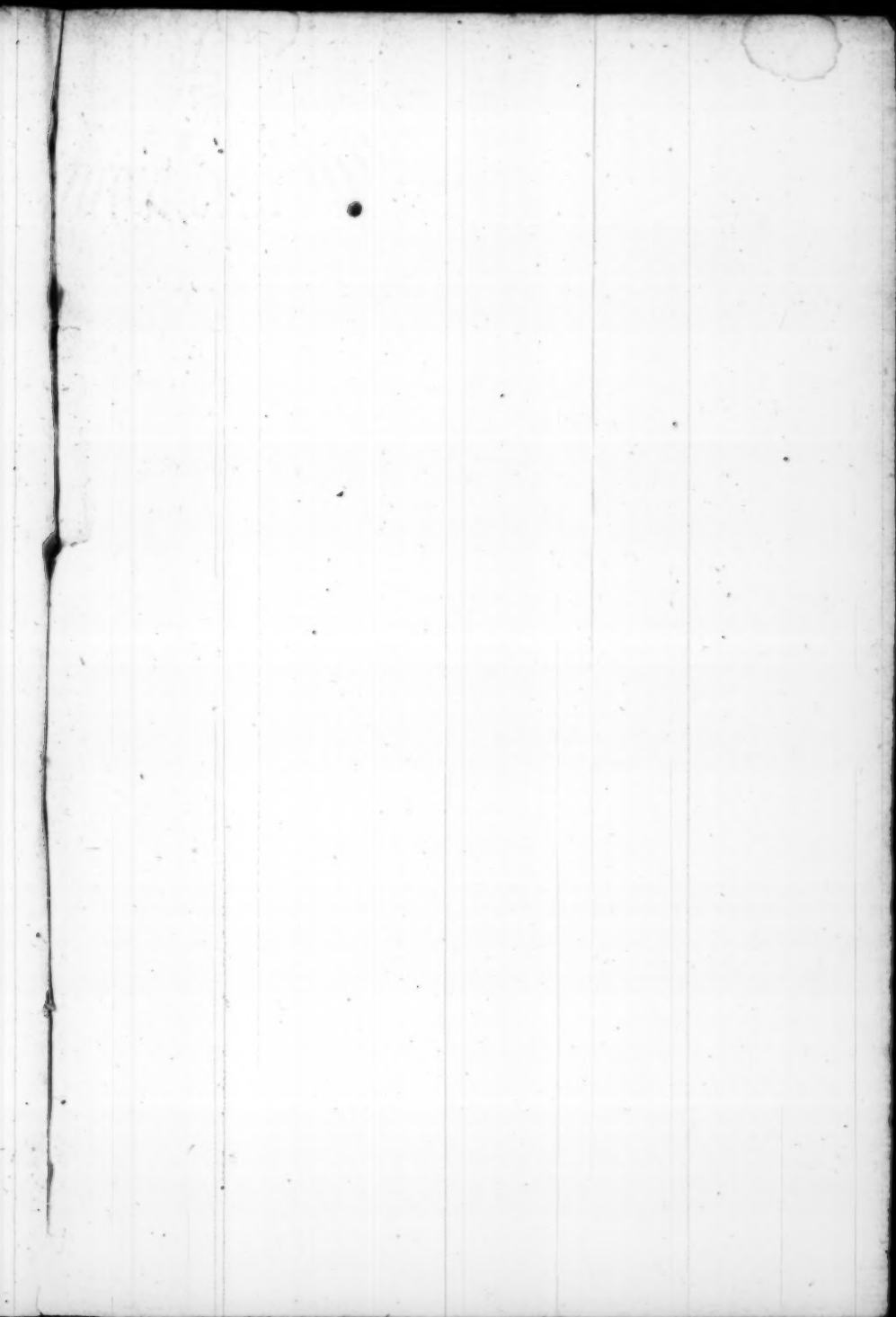
The Contents.

CHAP. XVIII.

To endeavour the conversion of others. 337

1. It being of general concern, 2. to convert a sinner from the error of his way, it being 1. to save, 2. a soul, 3. from death, 4. a means to cover multitudes of sins. Further motives. 1. Jesus Christ dyed to save souls, 2. others seek to destroy them, 3. This is God's great end of giving his Spirit, 4. It is an high honour, 5. a point of great wisdom, 6. an evidence of sincere love. 7. Till people are converted they are unprofitable. 8. Beasts are to be helped in danger. To manage what we do herein wisely.

The Conclusion of the whole.



Some few Errata escaped, are thus to be
corrected.

In the Epistle Dedicatory, p. 2. l. 18. for effectual read
subservient, and l. 19. for essential read effectual.

Page

23. marg. for regio, read regno, and for summè r.
sum me.

12. for Hosea 12. 4. r. 14.

70. marg. for Jer. 3. r. 31.

72. l. 5. for Psal. 12. r. 11.

73. l. 7. after the Hebrew, r. is.

95. marg. for ipsæ r. ipsos.

110. l. 25. for our r. one.

114. l. 2. for thins r. things.

166. l. 12. for Acts 14. r. 13.

245. l. 17. for the second toyling r. toying.

247. l. 17. for turn r. turns.

301. l. 4. before wrought r. first.



ENGLAND'S

Sole and Sovereign way of being saved.

PSALM 80. 19.

*Turn us again, O Lord God of
Hosts : Cause thy face to shine,
and we shall be saved.*

CHAP. I.

*The general Scope, Summe, and Parts of
the words.*

IF we consult this Psalm, we shall find, that
the Church and people of God, were here
at this time in a sad condition; they were
under sore trials, and afflictions. Those former
manifold mercies which the Lord had exhibi-
ted to them, were now changed into miseries
and distresses. *The Lord fed them with the bread
of tears, and gave them tears to drink in great
measure. He made them a strife unto their
neighbours, and their enemies laugh among
themselves.*

themselves. v. 6. 7. and being in so sad a condition they do in this Psalm pray for deliverance : and these words here which I have chose to discourse of, are part of their prayer, yea a main, chief, and principal part. With this they begin *v. 3.* and go on with *v. 7.* and conclude with *v. 19.* and a blessed part they are indeed : and they in their prestures, in their miseries and calamities, thus praying, pray well, and indeed they could not pray better ; for they thus praying, go the right way, and take the most effectual course, both to be heard and to be saved. For 1. we in our suits and supplications, never please God better, nor are welcomer into his presence, nor likelier to speed, than when we ask most ; I mean, what is best, and of greatest and highest importance. *Math. 6. 33. 2 Chron. 7. 14.* And 2. for the Lord God of Hosts, to turn a people again, and cause his face to shine, is the onely way for a people to be saved. And this they here pray for, yea and this is the onely way to have *England* saved, to have this Nation saved, Kingdom saved, Church saved, City saved, Towns saved, Families saved, our selves, and ours, and all saved, for *God to turn us again, and cause his face to shine* ; and when God does thus, we shall be saved indeed, saved to purpose, saved in mercy, saved aright : so that a Discourse of these words must needs be very seasonable, and soveraign ; for they are the very platform of a peoples weal, and do contain in them their onely right way of being saved. I shall not stand

Hic versus & ordine est tertius, & tertio per hunc Psalmum repetitur : quod ob id moneo, ut intelligamus Prophetam in hac petitione, quod hic versus complectitur, universam constituisse salutis spem. *Anse. in loc.*

stand at the present to give you any farther account of the Psalm in general; only take notice, that the words are the burden, or weight of the Psalm; we have them no less than twice before: as v. 3. *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.* Versus intercalaris.

They pray v. 1. & 2. *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us.* But how would they be saved? what is that they so much desire and breath after, that they may be saved? why, *Turn us again, say they, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved:* and then again v. 7. *Turn us again, &c.* They had made before very sad complaints, v. 4, 5, 6. how that *God was angry against their prayer, and fed them with the bread of tears, &c.* But how ill soever it was with them at present, they beg but this of God, *that he would turn them again, and cause his face to shine,* and then they promise to themselves that all shall certainly be well with them, *and they shall be saved:* and then again in the 19. v. with this, namely, the words I have made choice of, they conclude, and shut up all, *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.* Thus they three times repeat the same thing, as if they could never pray it enough: and we scarce find the like in all holy Writ, and therefore is it the more to be looked into, and observ'd,

Hic versus principalem continet propositionem, hinc tertiò repetitur, eoque Psalmus concluditur.

Alollers

Non inanem
battologiam
dicat nobis
Dei Spiritus
eandem pre-
ces ter in-
culcando, sed
ut malis gra-
vati, audaci
nihilominus
assurgamus,
hæc futura
nobis sæpius
offertur.

and seriously weighed, and considered. And these their so frequent and earnest requests of the same things, we are not to look upon them as vain Tautologies, or needless repetitions, but as they do denote the fervency of their Prayer, so the great importance, excellency, and necessity of the things prayed for: that they were infinitely concern'd in them, and that the want of them as to their being saved, could not be dispens'd with; namely, *God's turning them again to himself, and causing his face to shine.* So that these words are not onely the burden, but the very beauty and blessing of the Psalm. Its very marrow and sweetness consists and is concentred in them; and hence do they so often repeat them, not knowing how to be denied what is contained in them, viz. *God's turning them again, and causing his face to shine,* but beg them again and again, and make them their fixed petition, and importunate prayer; in which prayer take notice of these three things.

1. The person, whom they direct their prayer to, and that is God, to whom alone all prayer is to be directed; and him they stile here the *Lord God of Hosts*: and so though their case was dark, and seem'd even desperate, yet looking to God's power, as being the Lord God of Hosts, this gives them light and hope of relief; for what is or can be too hard for him to do?
2. The subject matter of their prayer: and that is 1. that *God would turn them again,* and 2. *cause his face to shine*; and then
3. we have here the blessed fruit, and happy effect, which

which they promise to themselves, upon audience, and that is, *that they shall be saved. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts: cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.* This prayer is but short, but exceeding sweet; the words few, but very full. For we have contained in them,

1. The great Gospel-blessing, and that of *Jesus* being raised up by his Father, which is the turning of us away from our iniquities. *Act. 3. 26. Unto you first, God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you: but how? in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

2. We have contain'd in them man's chief happiness, and his true and onely felicity, *viz.* God's favour, the light of his countenance, for God to cause his face to shine. 3. Man's being saved; which is very comprehensive and does denote, not onely freedom from Enemies, and evils of all sorts, though that most properly, but fruition also of all good.

CHAP. II.

The Explication of the Words.

Turn us again, or convert us, *i. e.* from our sins, and iniquities to thy self; from our own wayes, which have not been good, to thine, from which we have turned aside, and gone astray.

And well do they begin, and continue so earnest

earnest for this; for as all our misery did at first, and does still come in, by our Apostacy and turnings aside, and turning away from God, so our happiness cannot be recovered again, but in our returns to him. Look as that was, and is the very spring and foundation of all our woe, so this of our weal; and in all our miseries and calamities, the very first step to our cure and recovery begins here: and hence is it, that the Church and people of God are here so urgent upon this, again and again; yea and hence is this held forth as the great business and design of Christ, in suffering for our sins, that he might bring us to God; for otherwise, we could never have been brought again to be happy. *1 Pet. 3.18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, &c.* This turning again may refer, either to those of them that were never as yet turned; or to those, who being once turn'd, had, in some measure at least, turn'd again aside, made some defection: as indeed the best are very prone to do. *Hos. 11. 7. My people are bent to backsliding from me.* and *Exod. 32.8. They have turn'd aside quickly out of the way, &c.* And thus they here beg of God, to turn them again, and to heal their backslidings; and though this is, and ought to be our endeavour, yet it being God's work, as unable to turn themselves, they apply themselves to him: and this turn we ought to endeavour, and to pray for still, more and more, it being the work and business of our whole lives

lives, to turn to God more and more ; the last step of repentance being the first step of Glory, and the last step of turning the first step of triumphing.

Some indeed do render this, *turn us again*, return us, or restore us, recover us, *i. e.* say they, from our Captivity to our former state, &c. And many go this way ; but surely it is more than such a turning, that the Church here is so importunate for, *viz.* a spiritual and gracious turn, a saving conversion, a turning from sin to God, that God would make them true Penitents, sound converts, new men : they pray for amendment, as the very essence of repentance : and without this, what would the other signifie, or avail, or what true comfort could it afford to have their outward condition turn'd, and hearts unturn'd ? or how, unless they were turned by repentance, could they ever expect, that the Lord should shew them the evidence of his favour ; and besides, as to their recovery from their present miseries and calamities, that they had prayed for in other verses in this Psalm, and in praying for these first, they therein take the readiest and most effectual course for the other : and therefore this turning here again, we are mainly and chiefly to understand of turning to God by repentance ; as we find the same word elsewhere understood and taken : as *Lament. 5. 21. Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, &c.* and *Jer. 31. 18. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, &c.* and so frequently elsewhere, the same word is

Kimchi, idem esse dicit quod dirige corda nostra ad te : & hanc lectionem cur rejicere nunc non apparet ulla ratio. Musc.

England's *sole and*

made use of: and thus several Expositors carry it; and this, says a Learned Interpreter, is the special petition here insisted upon, that God by giving repentance would reclaim them from their Apostacy, and grant the evidence of his favour unto them, and so deliver and save them. So that Repentance, Reconciliation, and Salvation, is that which is here prayed for, that God would turn their hearts by unfeigned repentance, that so they might be fit for deliverance.

יהוה
אלהינו
צבאות
Dominus Deus
exercituum.

—O Lord God of Hosts. Thus they stile God, and under this notion, eye him, and consider him, the more to strengthen their faith and hope, as concerning the things they prayed for, and for gaining the more firm assurance of obtaining them. In the 3. v. they pray, O God, in the 7. O God of Hosts, and then here in this verse, O Lord God of Hosts. Thus by degrees they rise higher and higher, and get more and more ground, for the strengthening of their faith. What could not God do, especially the God of Hosts? and much more the Lord God of Hosts. Thus in our addresles to God we should so consider of him, as may most strengthen our faith, and encourage our hopes, as to the obtaining of what we have access unto God for; and thus our Saviour himself hath taught us to do, *Math. 6. 13. for thine is the Kingdom, and power, &c.*

Aspice nos vultu
sereno ac bene-
volento. Ps/c.

—Cause thy face to shine: i.e. in a word, vouchsafe us thy favour, shew thy self gracious and propitious to us in thy Son, give us the
sense

Sovereign way of being saved.

sense of thy love: and because favour and grace much appears and manifests it self in the face, in the serenity of the face, in the pleasantness and lightfomness of the countenance, hence is this phrase both here, and in many places elsewhere, made use of, to set forth the favour and grace of God: as *Psalm. 31. 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.* So *Psalm. 67. 1.—119. 135, &c.* and it is the same with that *Psalm 4. 6. lift thou up upon us the light of thy countenance.* And these forms and expressions seem to be taken from that solemn form of blessing the people, prescribed by the Lord himself, *Numbers 6. 25, 26. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, —the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee.*

—*And we shall be saved: i. e.* if thou vouchsafe but to do these for us, it shall be well with us, we shall be happy, this will remedy all our evils, and be to us as it were a resurrection from the dead; it will bring full salvation and deliverance from our miseries here, and eternal salvation to us hereafter, and upon God's turning them again, and causing his face to shine, this they certainly and undoubtedly promise to themselves; as well they might, for what should effect it, if not these? for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine.

His rebus fractum & felicitatem salutis assignat, dicens, Et salvemus, & regnabimus, nec ullo bono destitue-
mur, si placatus nos respicias, & conversos ad te, benignus completaris. *Musei*

CHAP. III.

The first Doctrine observable as more general.

THE time and season, when it was that they made this prayer, that God *would turn them again, &c.* it was a time of trouble, and distress. Whence observe,

Doct. 1. *When miseries and calamities do abide the Church and people of God, that which then more especially and most earnestly they are to pray for, it is that the Lord would vouchsafe them spiritual mercies:*

*In omnibus
angustiis favor
& gratia Dei
inprimis qua-
renda, & im-
ploranda est.
Amen in locum.*

As that God would *turn them again, and cause his face to shine*, that he would *lift up upon them the light of his Countenance*, vouchsafe them his favour, and grace, &c. This indeed they are to seek at all times, *Psal. 105. 4. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore*, but then more especially, and more than the removal of outward evils, or the obtaining of other mercies and blessings; because God then seems to suspend them, and as it was to hide his face, and to withdraw the sense of his favour: and then they most need them, yea and then the experiencing of such mercies is most seasonable. Thus the Church and people of God do here: the Lord *fed them with the bread of tears, and gave them tears to drink in great*

Sovereign way of being saved.

11

great measure, &c. And what do they now pray and importune for? for spiritual blessings, Soul-mercies, that God would turn them again, and cause his face to shine, and thus we are to doe

R. 1. Because this is that which the Lord prescribes, and puts his people upon, and advises them to: As *Hosea 14. 1, 27. take with you words, and turn to the Lord. Say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, &c. Zeph. 2. 3. Seek ye the Lord, seek righteousness, seek meekness, &c.* And how should we bless the Lord, that gives us this counsel, and advice, to seek things so excellent, and of such importance, and wherein we are so infinitely concern'd, and the having of which is of such absolute and indispensable necessity, as that we cannot at any time want them, nor be without them, much less at such times? who would not seek God's face, divine favours at any time, but especially at such times?

R. 2. This is that which others have done, as here, so elsewhere: as *Psal. 90. 14. Moses* there in a time of great and grievous calamities, prays that the Lord would *return and satisfy them early with his mercy*, or loving kindness, for so the word is rendred elsewhere, as *Psal. 26. 3. the same word*; so *Psal. 119. 76. i. e. with thy favour, the sense of thy love*; and *v. 17. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, &c.* So *Isaiah 26. 8. Yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance*

1101

England's sole and

membrance of thee. v. 9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early, &c. Lament. 5. 21. Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, &c. and so David often, still when he was in any distress, he is seeking for spiritual mercies, as Psalm 31. 16. make thy face to shine on thy Servant: 35. 5. say to my soul I am thy Salvation. Psalm. 119. 76. Let I pray thee thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, v. 77. let thy tender mercies come unto me, &c.

R. 3. Want of this the Lord complains of. *Hos. 7. 4. They assemble themselves for corn and wine, &c. Isa. 9. 13. neither seek they the Lord of Hosts.*

R. 4. To this the promise is made of pardon, and healing too. *2 Chron. 7. 13. If (says the Lord) I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or send pestilence, &c. v. 14. If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their evill wayes, then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

R. 5. This is the onely way to have those miseries and calamities removed in mercy, so as to be sanctified before their removal, to seek unto God to turn us again to himself, and to cause his face to shine: and unless the Lord do this, they cannot be removed in mercy, but we must expect heavier, and forer, as the Lord threatens, *Is. 9. 13, 14. Amos 4. 11, 12. Levit. 26. 21. &c. for he will overcome when he judges, but*

Sovereign way of being saved.

but if he vouchsafe those spiritual mercies; though the other should continue, they could do us no hurt, the evil and sting of them being remov'd.

R. 6. If the other should still continue, these will comfort and support under them, and the joy and comfort of them more than counter-vail the other; there being no comparison between them, but the one exceedingly transcending the other. As the *sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed hereafter*, so neither are they to be compared with spiritual mercies here; as for God to turn us again to himself, to pardon our sins, to cause his face to shine, to vouchsafe us his favour, and his comforts, and consolations. What sufferings or afflictions will not these comfort and support under? or what other wants will they not more than counter-vail? what are the world's frowns to God's smiles, the world's troubles to God's peace, the world's sorrows to God's joyes, the world's afflictions to God's consolations, the world's pressures to the pleasures of God's presence, or its burdens to the rest which that affords? what are its Bitters to God's Sweets, its Gall and Wormwood to the Wine of his Love? Cant. 1. 2. *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine*: and v. 4. *--we will remember thy love more than wine, yea 'tis better than life*, and in it, even in death it self, there is life. And hence is it, that the Apostle speaks what is a Paradox to the men

England's sole and

men of the world, troubled but not distressed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as having nothing and yet possessing all things, as dying and yet behold we live, live in the light of God's countenance, in his sight, as *Hosea 6. 2.* --and we shall live in his sight; where indeed only the Soul truly lives, and there it may live, even in death, and have light arise to it, even in darkness, and see light in the greatest obscurity: and this light, I mean the light of God's countenance, it giveth Songs even in the night, as it did to *Paul and Silas*, when thrust into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the Stocks, yet God's gracious presence did so cheer their spirits, and put such joy into their hearts, that even at midnight they brake forth in praises to God. *Acts 16. 25:* And at midnight *Paul and Silas* prayed, and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them: they did not onely pray, but sing prayses, and sung so loud, that others heard them, the prisoners heard them, they were awaken'd by them. And what did they think of them? surely they thought they were not well in their wits, to sing at such a time, and in such a place, and in such a condition, who having been beaten, and many stripes laid upon them, were cast into prison, yea thrust into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, and yet now to sing! O if God cause but his face to shine, if he lift but up the light of his countenance, it will make a man sing at any time, in any place, in any condition, it will turn a prison into a Pallace, and a dungeon

geon into a Paradise. This made *David* to have his Psalms, yea *Michtams*, i. his golden Psalms, or (as the *Dutch* render it) his golden Jewels, it signifies what is made of the best and finest gold, so called because of their singular preciousness and excellency) in the saddest places, and in the saddest outward condition; as when the *Philistins* took him in *Gath*, when he fled from *Saul* in the *Cave*, when *Saul* sent, and they watcht the house to kill him, &c. See Psalm 56, 57, 59, the Titles: *Moses*, Psalm 90. 14. prays, *O satisfie us early with thy mercy, i. e. with thy loving kindness, vouchsafe us thy favour, that we may rejoyce and be glad all our dayes.* This is enough to make the people of God rejoyce, and be glad all their dayes, be they never so dark and gloomy, evil and perillous. As we have received mercy, sayes the Apostle, we faint not, 2 Cor. 4. 1. The Lord tels *Moses*, Exod. 33. 14. *My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.* Though *Moses* was to go through a wearisome wilderness, and amidst a wearisom people, yet the Lord's presence should give him rest. We may go any where with him, he will be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isa. 32. 2.

Aureum ornamentum, aut insigne, ex purissimo auro factum.

Use 1. Of Reproof to those, who when miseries and calamities are upon themselves, or the Nation, look after the removal of them, but not after Spiritual mercies; they are very earnest and solicitous, that God would take away

away their outward plagues, remove his judgments, but not that God would take away their sins, and *turn them again to himself*, and *cause his face to shine*. But so God will but do the other, free them of their miseries, let the latter do what they will. Psalm. 4. 6. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good? i. e. any outward good, how to compasse any earthly worldly gain, or advantage : O that we might have peace and plenty, or how shall we once get out of these troubles and afflictions ? but few say with David, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, and then all shall be well, if thou do but this. Many when they are in pain, and sick and weak, they cry out indeed, but for what ? for ease, and health, and recovery, not that they may be turned from their sins, and recover God's favour ; as *Pharaoh*, he calls to have other plagues taken away, but never begs to have the plague of his own heart taken away, which was the greatest of all, and far worse than all the other ; but this is the voice onely of nature and argues a graceless heart, and that which the Lord, as I said, complains of, *Hof. 6. 14.*

Use 2. Of Exhortation. Then when miseries and calamities do abide us, let this be our Prayer, let us with the Church and people of God here, more especially and most earnestly beg and implore spiritual mercies, that God would *turn us again, and cause his face to shine ; lift up upon us the light of his countenance, vouchsafe us his grace and favour, bless us in*

turning

Sovereign way of being saved.

17

turning us from our iniquities: let us be importunate for these, ask them again and again, and whatever outward evils or distresses may abide us, these, as you have heard, will not only comfort and support us under them, but more than countervail them. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble, &c? if God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8.31. You know what Philip said to our Saviour, John. 14. 8. Lord shew us the father, and it sufficeth us. So let but the Father shew us himself, shine on us with his face, vouchsafe us his favour, and it sufficeth: As the Lord said unto Paul, and says to all his people, 2 Corinth. 12.9. my grace is sufficient for thee, though then Paul was in an ill case, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, &c. v. 7. yet says the Lord to him, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Let our condition be what it will, let it seem never so sad, let our tryals and afflictions be never so many and great, yet God's grace, i.e. his favour, his accepting grace, is sufficient to comfort us; yea, and his sanctifying, strengthening, and supporting grace to uphold us. When (says David) I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy O Lord held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul. Psalm 94. 18, 19. The Lord alone, and his favour, is a full compleat and more than sufficient counter-comfort to all troubles, and calamities whatsoever, and the light of his countenance does not only put

C

more

more joy and gladness into their hearts, upon whom it is lift up, than in the time when others Corn and Wine increases, but it puts more joy than the greatest decrease of them can occasion sorrow. *Habuk. 3. 17, 18. Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines, &c. yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, &c.* yea it alters the very nature of the evils themselves, that they are not what they were; that sickness is not sickness, as it were; hence it is said, *Is. 33. 24. And the Inhabitants shall not say I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.* And hence *Matth. 9. 2.* our Saviour there bids the man sick of the Palsie, *be of good cheer, his sins being forgiven,* though his sickness was not yet cured; and so had he cause, had it never been cured: *In six, yea in seven troubles this keeps all evil from touching us. Job 5. 19.*

And therefore how earnestly, how importunately, at all times, but more especially in evil times, should we implore these mercies?

CHAP. IV.

The second Doctrine observable, as more general.

Looking upon these words, as being the burden of the Psalm, and that which the Church and people of God do so often and earnestly beg and intreat, again and again, no less

less than three times v. 3, 7, 19, in this one Psalm; thence we observe,

Doct. 2. *Spiritual blessings, special peculiar mercies, are to be prayed for with all earnestness, not onely simply to be asked, to be sought, but in such a way, and after such a manner, viz. frequently and fervently, often and earnestly, again and again, with ardency and utmost importunity.*

Ter repetitur hæc precatio, ut fieri solet, quando animus in invocatione ardet. Strigelius.

For thus the Church and people of God seek them here, for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine, these were Spiritual blessings, choice, special, and peculiar mercies, Soul-benefits, and they are earnest and importunate for them, they beg them once and again, and again, as if they would not be denied them, and as if they were resolv'd not to be put off without them.

But what are we to understand by Spiritual blessings, by special peculiar mercies? By these we are to understand, in a word, such as these here specified, and such like: as for God to turn us from our sins to himself, to take away our iniquities, and receive us graciously; for him to be our God, and for us to be his people, and vouchsafe us his favour, Spirit, grace, his accepting grace, and his sanctifying and renewing grace, pardon of sin, and power against sin, the blessings of the Covenant, the sure mercies of David, such as we find recorded in these and the like places. Jer. 31. 33, 34.

---32, 38, 39, 40. *Ezek.* 36. 25, 26, 27, &c. *Micah* 7. 19. &c. And such blessings, such mercies, are thus to be prayed for, thus to be sought:

R. 1. Because God thus commands us to seek them; and unless we thus seek them, we do not seek them as he enjoyns. *Psal.* 105. 4. *Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore.* *Math.* 6. 33. *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God; and his righteousness, &c.* first, not onely in regard of order of time, but earnestness of endeavours: we are commanded to seek these not onely before other things, but more than other things. As these must be first, so chief and most in our pursuits. So *Joh:* 6. 27. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the father sealed:* not that we are forbidden to labour for things necessary to this life, for that we are and ought to do; but the meaning is, that we must mainly and chiefly labour for that meat that endures to everlasting life, that is, for Christ and his benefits, those things appointed by God for refreshing and sustaining the soul to eternity. So that this is to be understood comparatively, rather for the meat, &c. preferring the one before the other, as when it's said, *Matth.* 9. 13. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,* he excludes not sacrifice, but preferreth mercy. So *Luke* 11. 9. *And I say unto you ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened*

Sovereign way of being saved.

21

opened unto you. By these expressions Christ enjoyns earnestness and perseverance in prayer; for it is not a bare simple repetition of the same thing, but a gradation, and it is meant of things necessary to salvation; and the whole scope of the place is to stir up to earnestness, *Ask*, and do not onely ask, but *seek*, yea and not onely seek, but *knock*. Thus when the Lord prescribes unto *Aaron*, and his Sons, to bless the children of *Israel*, which was by supplicating his face and favour, this they were to implore again and again, as in that form, *Numbers* 6.25. *The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee.* v. 26. *The Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

Scopus est o-
portere nos
constanter o-
rare, & cum
ardore.

R. 2. Because others have thus sought them, even with all earnestness; as the Church and people of God here, and so others elsewhere. The Prophet *David* tels us, *Psalms* 119. 58. he intreated the favour of God: but how? with his whole heart: *I intreated thy favour with my whole heart.* So how often in the same Psalm does he beg of God to quicken him, and to teach him his statutes, nine or ten times the one, and seven or eight times the other. So how importunate is he for pardon, *Psalms* 51. 6. ---according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. v. 2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, & cleanse me from my sin.* v. 7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, &c.* v. 9. *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities, &c.* And how importunate was *Jacob* for the blessing?

Voluntariè re-
manferat solus
precandi cau-
sa.

Est in his 'ap-
θρωπονάθεια:
nam de Deo
quasi de viro,
humanitus
Scriptura lo-
quitur. Pareus.

Etiam luxatus
& læsus non
cessat, &c.

Israel, i. e. A
Prince of God,
or one having
Princely pow-
er with God.

sing? *Gen. 32. 24. And Jacob was left alone: this was on purpose, and upon choice, to wrestle with God by secret prayer, and there wrestled a man with him untill the breaking of the day.* This man was the Son of God, appearing in the shape of a man, called after, and by the Prophet *Hosea*, God, and an Angel. *Hosea 12. 3, 4.* And this strife was more spiritual, with prayers and tears, than corporal; and it's said, *v. 26.* that the man said, *let me go, for the day breaketh, but Jacob said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* Though Jacob was lam'd, and so exceeding hard laid at, yet he will not let him go without a blessing. *v. 27. And he said unto him, what is thy name,* as if he had said, Thou art such a man, as I have scarce met with the like, thou deserveest a Title of Honour indeed, and thou shalt have it, who art such a Conquerour, who thus not onely stirrest up thy self to take hold of me, but hast prevailed over me. *v. 28. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, or not onely, or not so much Jacob, but Israel: for as a Prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.* See also *Hosea 12. 3, 4.* --he wept, and made supplication to him, &c. So how earnest was *Moses* for pardon and forgiveness for the *Israelites*? *Exod. 32. 32.* --yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin: an abrupt manner of speaking, noting the earnestness of his prayer, we may understand it shall be well; and if not, blot me I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written: The like we read

read of *Paul, Rom. 9. 3.* and both shew their zeal for God's glory, and earnestness for that, which made so much for the weal of those they prayed for. So *Numbers 14. 18, 19.* *Pardon I beseech thee the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy: and how earnest was he for God's presence? Exod. 33. 15.* *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence; for wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not that thou goest with us, &c.* Thus our Saviour tels us, *Math. 11. 12.* *That from the dayes of John the Baptist untill then, the Kingdom of Heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force.* What blessed days were these? people then were resolv'd for heaven, there was an heaven to be had, and an heaven they would have what ever it cost them; they did not stand saying, shall we, shall we, as we do in these days, but were firmly set and fixt for heaven. By the Kingdom of heaven here we are to understand, not onely heaven it self, (a) but what leads to it, and fits for it, as grace, holiness, righteousness, &c. and such forwardness and zeal was there then for these, that they strove with greatest earnestness to procure them: they took them by force, as a Castle is taken by storm; (b) they made a prey or prize of them, nothing less would satisfie them; as it is said of *Luther*, that he protested he would not be put off with other things (c): and it is said of Father *Latimer*, that he so plied the Throne of Grace with this once again, &c.

(a) Media illa per que regio cœli pervenitur. *Tossan.*

(b) Metaphora sumpta a castris, vel ab agce quapiam, quæ irruptionibus hostibus diripitur. *Beza.*

(c) Proteritus summè nolle sic satiari ab

once again, restore the Gospel to *England*, as if he would have no nay at God's hands, and he many times continued kneeling and knocking so long together, that he was not able to rise up without help : and *Monica*, the mother of *Austin*, was so earnest for his conversion, that it was said it was impossible for a son of so many prayers and tears to perish. And *Epaphras* is said, *Coloss.* 4. 12. *to labour fervently*, or to strive, that is, to press with greatest zeal and earnestness in his prayers for the *Colossians*, that they might stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God. And thus the Citizens of *Sion*, the true members of God's Church, are described, *Psal.* 24. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.* or seek the face of *Jacob*, that is, of the God of *Jacob*, so some supply ; others say, God is pleased to stile himself by the name of *Jacob*, being the God of *Jacob*, and there being such a near union between him and his people, as the Church is called Christ, *1 Cor.* 12. 12. or this is *Jacob*, these are the true children of *Jacob*, and true *Israelites* indeed, that herein imitate and resemble *Jacob*, who so earnestly sought the Blessing. So that the Saints formerly were so earnest in seeking the Lord, and his face, that from thence they were stiled a generation of Seekers, such, who having found God, seek him yet again, and seek him more and more, and here there is still more of God to be found ; and therefore more to be sought, till in heaven we come fully to enjoy him. And these are the

the true Seekers indeed, far and altogether different from some, who have so stiled themselves in these later days, they being no better indeed, as one says, than the Jesuites by-blows, though they are not yet so wise as to know their own Father, and an evill and an adulterous generation. But these true members of the Church indeed, they were such as still sought the Lord, and his face, with their whole hearts; and greatest earnestness of desire. Here are two distinct words in the Original, and both denote more than ordinary seeking; the first signifies a very diligent search, a laborious enquiry, a strong desire to find what we seek, and a kind of unquietness or restlessness, till we find it: As *Psalms 132.4.* And the other word signifies also, to seek studiously, &c. So that they sought, and they sought earnestly, and there was nothing that they sought nor desired more than God and his favour, than communion with him, and conformity to him. And should not we seek them now, as others have done formerly? are they not as precious, and have we not as much need of them now as ever? nay by how much there are now clearer discoveries of them, by so much the more earnestly should we seek them.

R. 3. Because the nature of them requires it, and may command it; they being things which are so precious, and of so great importance, and so absolutely and indispensably necessary, that what should be sought with earnestness, if not these? as God, and his face and favour,

וַיִּשְׁׁרֹטְהוּ signifies
cat quærere
diligenter, et
cum curâ, &c.
Includit cu-
ram, sollicitu-
dinem, & dili-
gentiam. LXX
reddiderunt
verbo ἐμζη-
ῶν. בָּקַשׁ
studiosè quæ-
sivit, conatu et
studio, &c.

and grace, and pardon. It is reported of the *Macedonians*, that *Alexander* being displeased with them, they not onely laid by their Arms, and put on mourning apparel, and came running in Troups to his Tent, but that there they remained almost for three days together, beseeching his pardon, which at last they obtained. How much more should we implore God's pardon? But to instance onely in these two in my Text, as 1. for God to turn us again to himself; what an excellent thing is this, to be turned from *darkness to light*, from *Satan to God*, from sin to grace and holiness, from evill to good, from misery to felicity, from hell to heaven? Who would not be thus turned? And then of such absolute and indispenfable necessity is it, that we be turn'd, that we dye else, we are undone, and perish else, either we must be converted or destroyed; and then for God to cause his face to shine, how precious, how excellent is his favour? *Psalms 36.7. How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, &c. therein is life, yea it is better than life. Psalm 30. 5.---63. 3.* and so necessary, that though many live, no soul truly lives, but in the enjoyment of it. *Deut. 32.20.* God said there, *he would hide his face from that people, he would see what their end should be.* But O how sad must their end be, that he hides his face from, that he takes no pleasure in? *Psalms 30. 7. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troub'd. Job 34. 29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble, and when he hideth his face, who*

Sovereign way of being saved.

27

who then can behold him, whether it be done against a nation, or against a man onely? And things of such excellency, and such necessity, do not they require, and may they not command importunity? I remember a story, that one relates of a poor woman in *Essex*, that being condemned to dye, she fell a crying and screeching, as if she meant to pierce the heavens; and the Judge, and those on the Bench bidding her hold her peace, she cries, O my Lord it is for my life, I beg, I beseech you, it is for my life: So when thou goest to God to beg for such mercies, It is for thy life, yea for what is better than thy life, it is for the life of thy life, the life of thy soul, for that without which thou lovest thy soul, and dyest eternally, perishest everlastingly, and wilt not be earnest for this? and as blind *Bartimew*, cry out, and the more others bid thee hold thy peace, cry the more a great deal. *Prov. 2. 3. Yea if thou criest after wisdom, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, &c.* And what should we cry after, or lift up our voice for, if not for such mercies?

Mark 10. 46,
47, 48, &c.

R. 4. Because this shews that we are earnest for them, and that our desires are real, and not indifferent, when we are importunate for them, and are resolved not to go away without them, as the Prophet *David* was for mercy. *Psalms 57. 1. Be merciful to me O God, be merciful to me, &c.* So for pardon, *Psalms 51. Wash me, cleanse me, purge me, and again wash me.* So *Rachel* for children, *Give me children, or else*

Genes, 30. 1.

Math. 15. 21,
22, 23, &c.

else I dye. So that woman of *Canaan* for her daughter, she would not be said nay; and *Paul*, that the thorn in the flesh might depart, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. *for this thing I besought the Lord thrice.* And when we are thus earnest and importunate, we manifest and make appear our desires are real, and that we pray in truth, and such the Lord is nigh unto. *Psalms* 145. 18.

R. 5. Because this shews us to be in a fit posture and capacity to receive them. For this declares, 1. that we need them, that we want them, I mean that we have a due sense of our want of them, when we are importunate for them, and will not be said without them. For take a beggar that comes to your door for an Almes, if he be soon said, and presently goes his way, what do you say? surely he had no great need, for if he had, he would not so soon have taken an answer. 2. This declares that we value them, and set an high price, and esteem on them, when we are importunate for them; and these two bring us into a fit posture and capacity for to receive them, but else we shew no great need that we see of them, and withall a kind of slighting of them. As if a man was to ask some great matter, and he should ask it frigidly, coldly, carelessly, what would he say, that he askt it of? what is it no more worth than so? O when you go to seek spiritual mercies, you go to seek what is of great worth, of more worth than a whole world, and if ever you have them, God will have them valued, and have you see your want of them,
and

and so be brought into a capacity for them.

R. 6. Because we are so unworthy of them, of so great things, and therefore we must the more earnestly and importunately ask them, and seek them, by how much the more unworthy we are of them. *Psal. 34.6. This poor man cried unto the Lord.* Truly we are all of us such poor and unworthy creatures, that we had need not onely pray, but cry. Thus that poor woman of *Canaan* being in her own sense and apprehension so unworthy, but a *meer dog* as it were, how earnest is she? why, as *Jacob* said, so may we say more truly, *we are not worthy of the least of all God's mercies, or we are less than the least of all God's mercies.* We partake indeed of many mercies, as we have whole bundles of them, but if we search into them, we can find none so little, so small, but we are less our selves; and if we are not worthy of the least, how much more unworthy of so great? and therefore when we that are so unworthy of any the least mercies, go to God for so great, is there not cause we should be earnest and importunate? and so the sight and sense of our so great unworthiness, should so much the more stir up and increase our earnestness, as it hath done in others. So great matters, begg'd of so great a Majesty, and by such as are so mean, and unworthy, had need be begg'd with all importunity and earnestness. Majesty and greatness, considered with our weakness, and unworthiness, should much excite earnestness. *Jesus Christ* himself, though so worthy,

and

Math. 15. 21.
22. &c.

Genes. 32. 10.

England's sole and

and without sin, yet how earnest was he in prayer? *Hebr. 5. 7.* it is said, *he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, &c.* how much more we, who are involv'd in sin, &c.

R. 7. Because the great price which hath been given to purchase and procure them, no less than the precious blood of Christ, the precious life of Christ, *John 6. 51.* ---and the bread that I will give is my flesh, that I will give for the life of the world. *1 Thes. 5. 10.* ---who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him, the life of grace here, and the life of glory hereafter. *Ephes. 1. 7.* In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. *Math. 26. 28.* This is my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins: and *Hebr. 9. 22.* ---and without shedding of blood is no remission. So we read of being justified by his blood, and reconciled by his death, and of his suffering for our sins, that he might bring us unto God. And shall not we cry for what Jesus Christ was pleas'd to-day? shall not we earnestly beg for what he bled? shall not we lay out our strength for what he laid down his life, and lift up our voice for what he yeilded up the Ghost? O how unworthy then should we shew our selves of them?

R. 8. Because this is all that the Lord requires of us, for the obtaining of them; that we should ask them, seek them, beg them, intreat them, and should not we do this to purpose, earnestly, and with all our might, when he

Rom. 5. 9, 10.
1 Pet. 3. 18.

Sovereign way of being saved.

31

he requires no more: as *Math. 7. 7. Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. v. 8. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.* So in *Ezek. 36.* when God had made there those exceeding great and precious promises of blessings and mercies, more worth than many worlds; as *v. 25. that he would sprinkle clean water upon them, &c. and v. 26. give them a new heart, and put within them a new spirit, and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh: and v. 27. put his spirit within them, which is more than many worlds without them, and cause them to walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments and do them: and v. 28. and they should be his people, and he their God, &c.* Now after all, hear what the Lord says, *v. 37. Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquir'd of by the house of Israel, to do it for them, or be sought to; and is this all? and should not this be done earnestly? Surely, he that can't find in his heart to do this for such mercies, deserves to go without them. O consider, God required a great deal more of his Son, that we might partake of them. What could he indeed require more? he requires of him, that he should come down from Heaven to Earth, from the Throne to the Footstool, and become man, be made flesh, yea in the likeness of sinful flesh, that though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God: yet that he should make himself*

John 6. 38.

himself of no reputation, and take upon him the
 Philip. 5. 6, 7, form of a Servant, and be made in the likeness of
 8. men, and being found in fashion as a man, should
 humble himself, and become obedient unto death,
 even the death of the Cross, that he should lay
 down his life, shed his precious blood, one drop
 of whose blood is more worth than ten thou-
 sand thousand worlds, and than all the blood
 of all the men that ever lived upon the face of
 the Earth; yea, that he should be made a curse,
 undergo his wrath, make his very Soul an offer-
 ing for sin, and be for a while as it was for-
 saken of his Father; and all this, and infinitely
 more than can be conceived, much less exprest,
 that we might obtain such mercies; yea, and
 Jesus Christ willingly and readily obeyed his
 father in all these. *Hebr. 10. 7. Then said I,*
lo I come to do thy will, O God: and I delight
to do thy will, and ---as the Father gave me
commandment, so I do: though to do that, did
as it was amaze him, and make his soul excee-
ding sorrowful, even unto death, and brought
him into such an agony, that his sweat was as
it were great drops of blood falling down to the
ground. So that as man, he could not but re-
coile as it were, and pray, and that three times,
O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup passe
from me, that is, this bitter passion; but if it
may not pass, but I must drink it, or otherwise
such choice mercies, such inestimable benefits
cannot be procured for poor sinners, but they
must come swimming to them in my blood, and
be purchas'd by my undergoing of thy wrath,
 thy

Psalms 40. 8.

John 14. 31.

Mark 14. 33,

34. Math. 26

38.

Luke 22. 44.

Math. 26. 39.

and Mark 14.

35, 36, 39.

thy will be done, seeing thou wilt have it so, that I must undergo all this to procure them, I am willing, I am content, rather than poor sinners should go without them, I am willing to purchase them at any rate. This now God requires of his Son, that we might partake of these mercies, and all this his Son obeyed him in; but to us, that we might obtain them, he says onely, *ask, seek, knock*, and let me be enquired of by you: and should not we do this, and do it to purpose? surely else it must needs argue fearful ingratitude, and strange disingenuity, and we deserve to go without them. You know what *Naaman's* servant said to him, *2 Kings 5. 13. My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean?* So what could God have said unto us, do, for such mercies, (more worth than many worlds) but we should have been ready and willing to have done it? how much more then, when he says onely *ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek* and it shall find: and *Rom. 10. 13. whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved: and seek the Lord, and ye shall live, Amos 5. 6.* But Jesus Christ dies that we may live, *1 Thes. 5. 9. 10.* and shall not we cry, that we may live? Was a malefactor condemned to dye, and was there procured for him (upon some great price paid by another) a pardon of his Prince, which he should have upon asking and begging; O how importunately would he beg it, and ask

Psalm. 27. 8.

it? When God said to *David*, *Seek ye my face*, O how readily does *David's* heart eccho back again, *thy face Lord will I seek!* Lord, thy face, thy favour, makes heaven, and may I have that for seeking, for asking, which Jesus Christ procured by dying? Lord, I will seek it, and seek it to purpose, *intreat it*, as he says elsewhere, *with my whole heart*. *Ps. 119. 58.* And truly we had never had them for seeking, if Jesus had not purchased them by suffering; never for begging, if he had not purchased them by bleeding; nor for crying, if he had not purchased them by dying.

R. 9. Because this is the way to have them, thus to seek them, I mean with all earnestness, with all our might, with our whole hearts. Thus *Jacob* obtained the blessing, *Gen. 32. 29.* — and he blessed him there; *Moses*, pardon, and God's presence; *David* cleansing, and the recovery of God's face and favour; thus the woman of *Canaan* obtained the casting of the Devil out of her daughter; thus *Monica* obtain'd the conversion of her son *Austin*, &c. *The ears of the Lord are open to the cry of the righteous*, *Psalm 34. 15.* and *James 5. 16.* *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* That's the prayer that prevails, that carries it, the *effectual fervent prayer*. There is but one word in the Original, but it is so sublime, and Emphatical, that Translations cannot reach the height of it: The Greek properly signifies the *working prayer*, and it signifies such a working as notes the earnestest and liveliest activity that can be, the greatest force and

Διηγεῖται
προσεύχεται.

Sovereign way of being saved.

35

vehemency of an earnest spirit and affection. Such a prayer that sets the whole man a work, and all the graces a work, heart a work, and affections a work, and faith a work, & repentance a work, & love a work, &c. that strongly presses and enforces as it were upon God, and is not so much the labour of the lips, but the travel of the heart. These are the prayers that prevail, when there is an heat and warmth in our spirits, and our affections are fired by the holy Ghost, and with gracious ascents flame up towards God: when we pray a prayer, not onely say a prayer, and the *holy Ghost makes intercession for us, with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.*

The promise is made to such prayer, *Jerem. 29. 13. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Hosea 6. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, &c. Prov. 2. 3. Yea if thou cryest after knowledg, and liftest up thy voice for understanding. v. 4. If thou seek her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures. v. 5. Then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledg of God. Psalm. 81. 10. — open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

Thus it is wrestling in prayer that prevails, when there is such an holy impudency, as it were. as to take no denial; this is a token for good indeed, and to such God hath not said, seek ye me in vain: *Luk 11. 8. I say unto you, though he will not rise, and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth.* That which

Excussio supore & torpore, ardentier, instantius, cum fiducia, cœlum pulsemus, & compleamur clamoribus, & tum certò confidemus descensuram ad nos domini miserationem. Winckelman in Luc. 11.

Rom. 8. 26.

avast'lar.

we translate, Importunity, is in the Original, Impudence, and so the *Dutch* read it; *nevertheless for his impudence sake*, because of his immodest persistence, taking no denial. It seems to be a Metaphor, taken from a sort of Beggars, that when they come to your doors, will not be said without an Almes, you can't get them gone do what you can, speak them fair or foul, all is one, they will weary you out but they will have it, and so at length get it: and if an importunate impudent beggar gets from man, how much more shall an humble, daily, importunate petitioner obtain from God, to whom importunity is so acceptable, and at no time unseasonable, as yet it is to man? v. 7. *And he from within shall answer and say, trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed, &c.* as if he should say, Is there no time to come but now, or is this a time to come?

Ut in a eodem
ardore orare
possem, &c.

Fiat quod ve-
lis.

Luther was exceeding frequent and fervent in prayer: one writes of him, No day passes wherein *Luther* spendeth not three hours at least in prayer; and once it fell out, saith he, that I heard him: good God, what a spirit, what a confidence was in his very expressions, &c. And would to God (says *Luther*) I could always pray with a like ardour, for then I had always this answer, Be it unto thee as thou wilt. Thus to prevail in prayer, the way is to be earnest, and ardent in prayer; it is ardency, not eloquence that carries it here. *Matth.* 11. 12. — *and the violent take it by force, i.e.* they who with great earnestness and zeal, seek after salvation, they obtain it, and onely they.

R. 10. Because when we thus seek them, and obtain them, we shall the more value them, and with the more carefulness retain them, by how much the more wrestlings we acquired them: but lightly come, lightly go. When the Spouse *Cant. 3.* was at a loss for her beloved, and the after earnest pursuits found him, O how did she prize him and value him, and how carefully retain him, and would not let him go! &c. *v. 4. I held him; and would not let him go:* and so Mary her Master, *John 20. 16.*

O this is a mercy, says the Soul, that cost me many a sigh, and many a groan, and many a tear, and much tugging and wrestling, and therefore how singularly dear and precious is it to me, and I can by no means part with it! &c.

Use 1. Are spiritual mercies thus to be sought with such earnestness, fervently, and frequently? what shall we think of those then, that in stead of seeking them thus, scarce seek them at all? O how many prayerless families and persons are there, who call not on the name of the Lord! and how sad is the state of such, it cannot be exprest? For,

1. This is made the very badg and character of wicked men, yea and of the very worst of wicked men. *Psalms. 10. 4. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God, God is not in all his thoughts. Psalm 14. 4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord!* Thus it was said of her that was filthy and polluted, the oppressing city: *Zeph. 3. 1, 2. she drew not near to her God.*

2. Such

Psalms. 14. 1.

2. Such are practical Atheists, they live without God in the world, yea they say in effect, there is no God: for if there be a God, why do they not own and acknowledg him, and their dependance on him, by calling upon him, which not doing they practically deny him? and how sad is this not to own or acknowledg God?

Isaiah 1. 3. The Ox knows his owner, &c. we are bid in all our ways to *acknowledg him, Prov. 3. 6.* and in none of their ways to acknowledg him, but to live without him, as if they had no need of him, how sad must that needs be? as *John 1. 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* For God to make the world, and when he hath made it to be in it, taking care of, and providing for those he hath made in it, and they not know him! As if any of us should build an house for another, and then inhabit with him in that house, and take care of him, and there daily provide for him, and he not know us, nor own us, would it be indured?

3. Such are set and reckoned among Heathens: God can afford them no better place, however they call themselves Christians. *Jer. 10. 25. Heathens and families that call not on Gods name, are put together. Amos 9. 7. Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me?*

4. Such have none of God's Spirit, for in whomsoever the Spirit is, it is in them a Spirit of Supplication. *Zach. 12. 10. Rom. 8. 26. Gal. 4. 6.* And how sad is it not to have the Spirit? for *Rom. 8. 9. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ,*

Christ, he is none of his : and whose is he then ? and 2 Cor. 13. 5. *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, (that is, by his Spirit) except ye be Reprobates ?*

5. Such are spiritually dead, there's no spiritual life in them at all ; for as where natural life is, there is breath, so where ever there is spiritual life, there is prayer, it being as it were the breathing thereof. Thus it is said of *Saul*, that as soon as ever he was made spiritually alive, *behold he prayeth, Acts 9. 11.*

6. Such lie open to Gods wrath, yea to the pouring out of his fury, and the fierceness of his wrath. *Jer. 10. 25. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and the families that call not on thy name.* The least drop of God's anger, much more of his fury, is sad ; but what then are the floods, and the pourings out thereof ? the pourings out indeed of God's spirit, of his grace, of his mercies, and blessings, are sweet, but of his fury how dreadful ! and therefore *Consider this ye who forget God, and live without God in the world, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver :* and O how sad is it !

Psal. 50. 22.

That there should be such mercies and blessings to be had, that are not onely so excellent, but of such absolute and indispensable necessity, that without them you certainly perish, and yet not ask them, nor seek them ? For a man that must starve if he have not bread, and yet not ask it ? and dye, if he have not a pardon, and yet not petition for it ! But I cannot pray : go then to God to teach thee, and beg h's Spirit, that that

may be in thee a spirit of grace, and then a spirit of supplication; that thou mayest own that God, *in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways*: want of which was God's great charge against that heathenish Monarch *Belshazzar, Dan. 5. 23.*

Use 2. Let us be all humbled then, even the best of us, that we have no more thus fought them. We have fought them, it may be, but not with that earnestness that we should have done, but coldly, carelessly, as if we were indifferent, whether we had them or no; prayed, as if we prayed not, *not cried to him with our hearts*, as the Lord complains *Hos. 7. 14. not stirred up our selves to take hold of God*; nor wrestled as *Jacob* of old; but with the Spouse, *Cant. 3. 1. sought our beloved*, it may be, on our beds, sleepily, drowsily, negligently; and no wonder then though we have mist of him, who will be otherwise fought, if ever he be found.

Isaiah 64. 7.

Use 3. Let us be excited to seek them more earnestly for the future, as these here,

1. *For our selves.* Let us wrestle, as *Jacob* did, for the blessing, *weep and make supplication, pray without ceasing, continue instant in prayer*, not give out, nor over, but remember what *Jesus Christ* hath said for our encouragement herein, *Luke 11. 5, 6, 7, 8, &c* and *Luke 18. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c.* Let us resolve with *David*, *evening and morning, and at noon will I pray*, says he; and not onely pray, but *cry aloud*. That of *Father Latimer* to good *Ridley* is seasonable here, *Pray, pray, said he, O pray, pray.* For should things
of

of such excellency and necessity be askt frigidly, what was this but to debase them, and to betray a kind of slighting of them, and to make as if there was not that worth in them, nor that absolute and indispensable necessity of them, as indeed there is; whereas they are such things as we cannot want, nor be without, as God and his favour, and grace, sound conversion; as a poor soul under desertion, cryed out once in my hearing, Want God? saith she, O I cannot want him, nor be without him: and this she uttered with tears. No, we cannot be without God, and his favour, and grace. *Rachel cryes, give me children, or else I dye, Gen. 30. 1.* but we must have these, or our souls dye, and that eternally. O when we go to God for these, for grace, and that he would shine on us with his face, and turn us again to himself, do we know or consider what we go to him for? do we not go for that which is more worth than a world? a whole world? yea that amounts to more than many worlds, that is, more than heaven and earth it self. And should we not be earnest and importunate for these? for what then, or how else can we shew that we value them, or what do we do else but teach God to deny us them?

2. *For ours*: as for our children, and relations, those that are near and dear to us. For how else (as *Esther* said in another case, as concerning her people and kindred, *chap. 8. 6.*) can we endure to see the evil that will come upon them, and how can we endure to see their destruction? there being such absolute and indispensable

Qui frigide
rogat, docet
negare.

ble necessity of them, that ours must needs certainly and unavoidably perish without them: and shall the children of our own bowels be in danger of perishing for want of them, and shall we not be earnest for them? as Solomon's mother said, *Prov. 31. 2. what my Son? and what the son of my womb? and what the son of my vows?* and not be earnest? not wrestle? It is an abrupt kind of speech, and imports abundance of tender affection, and earnest desire of her son's welfare, more than she could utter or express; and therefore she several times repeats the same thing. O he was her Son, her most dear Son, and therefore the Son of her vows, the son of many prayers, and probably tears. * O let us pray for ours, as Abraham did for his son Ishmael, *Gen. 17. 18. And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee,* not onely live, but live before thee, or live in thy sight, live in thy face, so it is in the Hebrew, that is, in the shinings of thy face, in the light of thy countenance, *i. e.* live and enjoy thy love, thy favour, find grace in thy eyes: O that his soul may live, that he may live not onely a natural, a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal life, a blessed and happy life, the life of grace, and a life in thy favour here, and then the life of glory hereafter. And Abraham was very earnest and solicitous for this: O, says he, or, O if, *i. e.* I earnestly wish, or I beseech thee, I earnestly pray and intreat thee: it is the voice of one wishing and earnestly desiring a thing; O that Ishmael might live before thee. And this Abraham

* Cum filium
votorum no-
minet, ostendit
se non tantum
cum filio, de
pia ejus edu-
catione egisse,
sed Deo (sine
cujus auxilio
irritus fuisset
reliquus labor)
in precibus
commendasse,
&c. *Carturri-
tus in locum.*

יְהִי in con-
specu tuo, vel
in facie tua.

י Utinam,
Quæso, vocula
optantis.

ham speaks, 1. not as slighting or rejecting Gods promise, concerning a son of *Sarah*; as if he had said, Having *Ishmael*, I desire no more, nor 2. as despairing of the promise; as if he had said, I should have but little hope, if I had not more hope in *Ishmael* already born, than the promised son yet to be born, or how is it possible we should have a son at this age? and therefore, *O that Ishmael might live*, &c. It was not, I say, from hence, nor upon these grounds, that *Abraham* thus speaks; for when the Lord had made that promise to him, it is said, v. 17. that *Abraham* fell upon his face, he bowed himself; and this he did, not only as expressing reverence, but shewing his thankfulness, which was an evidence that he believed, and highly valued, and heartily embraced what God had promised; and whereas it is said, he laughed, it was not from doubting, or staggering at the promise, through unbelief, (*Rom. 4. 20.*) but as admiring the goodness of God in it; not as judging it impossible, or thinking it a fable, but as overjoyed and even amazed at such welcom tidings: it was not from distrust in God's power, but out of admiration at God's favour. And therefore this earnest wish of *Abraham*, as concerning his son *Ishmael*, that he might live in his sight, it proceeded from *Abraham's* dear and fatherly affection toward *Ishmael*, and his earnest desire of his weal, so that his affections being suddenly moved with the thought of *Ishmael*, they make him as it were forget other things, to beg for him; or, as if he had said, though I cannot well conceive

Videtur *Abraham* risu & intercessione sua pro *Ismaele*, in quem valde fuit intentus, quasi abruptisse Dei orationem, quam igitur v. 19. continuat, &c.

Abraham audiens promissionem de semine ex *Sarâ* orituro, eamque firmissimâ fide amplectens, toto pectore lætatur, & hæc non esse dubitantis, sed certissimæ fidei verba, *Paulus* clarè testatur *Rom. 4.*
Chytraus in *Gen. 17. 17.*

Bonus pater
audita promif-
fione de filio
novo, follicitus
eft etiam de
Ifmaelis falute;
metuens forte
ne totus abji-
ciatur: vitam
ei precatur non
modo natura-
lem, fed potiùs
felicem, &c.

*Pareus in lo-
cum.*

In promiffa
felicitate fra-
tri conjunga-
tur. *Funius.*

Quafi dicat,
peto et ejus
haberi ratio-
nem, ne abji-
ciatur, vel pereat.
Pareus.

Affectus hic
pii parentis in
filium, docet
præcipuam
parentum cu-
ram hanc efle
debere pro liberis, non ut colligant eis thefauros, fed ut conſervent &
commendent eos Deo piis precibus, &c. *Pareus.*

conceive how this ſhould be, that at this age I ſhould have a ſon, yet I believe and gladly embrace the promiſe; but however, *O that Iſhmael might live before thee*: let not him, O Lord, be caſt off, nor be abandoned by thee, but let him live in thy favour; though I have a promiſe indeed of another Son, yet I pray thee let it be well with this ſon alſo, bind up his ſoul in the bundle of life, let him live in thy love, let him be an heir of grace here, and an heir of glory hereafter. Thus, though *Abraham* did yeild to the promiſe, yet he thus ſpeaks, as being very ſollicitous for *Iſhmael*; that God would ſet his eyes and his heart upon him for good, for the chief good, for ſpiritual good, eternal good, for thus Interpreters generally carry it. Though God promiſed more ſeed to him, yea *that his ſeed ſhould be as the ſtars of heaven for number*, ch. 15. yet this does not remove nor take off his affection from one he had already, but ſtill his heart and endeared affections are towards him; he knew not how to have any one of his abandoned of God, but as if he had ſaid, Lord take care of him alſo, that he be not caſt off, or periſh. Thus the affections and deſires of this holy Patriarch were carried forth, not in gathering riches, or heaping up treaſures for his ſon, but in earneſt prayers to God for his eternal good. And this bleſſed example of his we ſhould follow, we ſhould imitate, ſo as to be very earneſt, and importunately ſollicitous for the great

concerns

concerns of our children; for spiritual blessings for them, special peculiar favours, tender mercies, bowels of mercy, the blessings of the covenant, the sure mercies of *David*, that their souls may live, that they may live in his sight, in his face, in the light of his countenance, that as he hath granted them life, so he would vouchsafe them his favour, which is the life of our lives, as *Job* speaks, *Job* 10. 12. that he would turn them again, and cause his face to shine on them, and so they may be saved; we should wrestle with the Lord, that he would thus bless them, and resolve with *Jacob*, *not to let him go, till he so bless them*, and bless them all, every one, both small and great, that so while some are taken, Luke 17. 34
35. others may not be left, but that those whom one house hath held, one heaven may hold, and that being all heirs of grace together here, they may come to be all heirs of glory together hereafter, that so hell may never be the fuller for any of ours; for which of ours can we endure to have lost, or spare to be left to ruine?

3. *For others*, but more especially for *Sion*, for *Jerusalem*, for the Church and people of God; we should for such mercies be very importunate, as these here, and the Prophets and people of God elsewhere: as the Prophet *Isaiah*, 62. 1. *For Sions sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, untill the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth.* Here the Prophet professeth his serious purpose of an unwearied constant sollicitation
of

Rememorantes
Dominum,
vel qui reminiscimini
Domini.

of God for his Church, of which *Sion* was a type; and it is, *till its righteousness go forth*; &c. And thus earnest, zealous, and importunate should we be for the Church and people of God; we should not onely propound our desires, but press and enforce them, as it is said afterward of the watchmen, upon the walls of *Jerusalem*, *v. 6. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night*; and then it follows, *ye that make mention of the Lord*, or, nearer the Hebrew, *Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers*, or ye that mind the Lord, to wit, of his Church, whose office it is to be still minding and solliciting him in its behalf: it is a term borrowed from the manner of Princes, who have certain Officers called their Remembrancers, to mind them of such matters, as concern the publick weal and welfare; and what an honour and priviledg is it to be remembrancers to the King of Heaven? and this honour have not onely his Ministers, but all his people: not that God is subject to forgetfulness, or can forget his Church, and the things that concern its weal, but for his own glory, and his peoples greater comfort, God will have it be thus, *viz.* that he be earnestly sollicitated, and sought to: and these now are bid to *give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth*, *i. e.* they must continue instant and constant in prayer, be urgent and importunate with God, untill he hear, and put his Church into such a condition, that all may praise her, or for which
she

she may become famous throughout the whole world. And thus let us both Ministers and people resolve to do, *not to hold our peace day nor night, nor keep silence, nor give the Lord rest, till he establish, and till he make our Jerusalem a praise to the Earth.* Let us not onely call upon his name, but *stir up our selves to take hold of him*: let us put forth all our strength, put out our selves to the utmost, yet to stay him with us; for *wo to us if he depart from us.* Want of this the Prophet *Isaiah* complains of, and acknowledges as a great sin. *Is. 64.6. And we all, says he, do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away, and yet there is none (v. 7.) that calleth upon thy name, that addresseth himself unto thee, at least aright, or but very few, so few, as that they were not as it were seen, nor did appear, but were hid in the multitude: or if more did call upon his name, yet they did not stir up themselves to take hold of God, to stay him with them, though he threatened, and was upon his departure from them, or they took not hold of his hand to stay him from striking them in his anger, for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.* And so the particle is used elsewhere, or as some, *when thou didst hide thy face from us, &c.* and so it is an heavy aggravation of their stupidity, sluggishness, and security, that though the Lord did manifest his displeasure against them, by the withdrawing the light of his countenance from them, and consumed them because of their iniquities, as he hath done

Emphasis est in verbo tenendi, sumptâ metaphorâ à patre irato, & manum ad ferulam expediente, cujus manum apprehensam alius teneat cohibeatq; ne feriat filium. *Arular. in locum.*

us, yet such was their stupor and sluggishness, that notwithstanding they did not stir up themselves to take hold of him, though he seem'd to be a going : and truly not to stir up our selves at such a time, does stir up the Lord the more against us ; such neglects do much provoke, for at such times we should be more than ordinary zealous, earnest, and importunate sollicitors for *Sion*, not onely proposing our desires, but enforcing and pressing the same with all fervency. And such let us be, O let every prayer be a pleading, a wrestling, with strong resolution, not to let him go, till he return in mercy unto *Sion*, and with a smiling and favourable countenance, look upon it. How earnest and solicitous was *Daniel* for *Jerusalem* in that prayer of his, *Dan.* 9.3. *And I set my face to the Lord God*, this shews his earnestness, setting all other things aside, *to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes* ; and *v.* 17. *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications.* Supplication differs from prayer, as being a further degree of enforcing our petitions, either by redoubling our suits, or pressing them with arguments. *And cause thy face to shine upon thy Sanctuary, for the Lord's sake : i. e.* shew thy grace and favour by the effects thereof, in restoring thy publick worship to the people : and *v.* 19. *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken, and defer not for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city, and thy people are called by thy name* : here is further fervency, earnestness, and holy zeal in prayer

prayer, uttering strong cries. So, David, *Psal.* 14. 7. *O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Sion!* or, who will give the salvation of *Israel*, &c. or *O that some would give: it is a* form and phrase of earnest wishing, usual with the Hebrews, and often used in Scripture elsewhere, and it gives us to see how solicitous *David* was for *Israel's* salvation; he forgot himself, as it were, for to remember that, and so should we.

Non tam privatim de se cogitat, quam de communi Ecclesie salute sollicitus.

CHAP. V.

The several points of Doctrine observable from the words, as more particular, and as being implied.

DOCTR. I. *We are all by nature turn'd aside, and gone away from God.*

Else what needed this being turn'd again? and this is observable from the words, as they respect those who were never yet turn'd, and therefore are here prayed for, that they may be turn'd or converted. Indeed, as God at first made us, he was with us; and we with him, and our faces were unto him; but now having sinned, our backs are upon him, and we are gone away from him, and by going on in sin, we go away still further from him, and this the Scripture every where holds forth; and hence by nature we are said to be *without God in the world*, *Ephes.* 2.

Psal. 14. 3.
— 18. 3.
Rom. 3. 12.
Isa. 53. 6.

Luke 1. 17.

Acts 26. 18.

19, 20.

Jr. 15. 16.

2. 27.

H. 1. 4.

Daniel 7. 10.

Matth. 18. 10.

horre,

horrefcere hor-

re.

12. and Christ is said to *suffer for sins* upon this account, *to bring us to God*, 1 Pet. 3. 18. yea, and this the Scripture holds forth as the great work of his Ministers, to turn people to him: And now briefly by way of Application.

Use 1. This it speaks our sin, that we are, and do still turn aside, and go away from God, forsake him, *thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward, &c. they have turn'd their back unto me, and not their face.* And what a slighting is this of God? and what scorn and contempt does it put upon him? for it is an action of scorn and disdain among men, to turn the back upon one, and to offer scorn and contempt to God? for a poor vile creature to turn the back upon him, whom the Angels adore, and to behold whose face it is their highest honour and felicity? Our sinfulness and great iniquity herein will the better appear, if we do but consider these three things:

1. What a God it is, that we have and do thus forsake, and turn aside and go away from:

As 1. *the living God*. Jer. 10. 10. &c. yea *the fountain of living waters*, Jer. 2. 13. the very spring, and sole and sovereign Author, and original of all true happiness, help, comfort, and support here, and of eternal life and felicity hereafter: and this is such an evil, as the Lord calls the very Heavens to be astonish'd at, Jerem. 2.

12. *Be agonish'd, O ye heavens at this, and be horribly afraid: properly, let the hair stand straight up, that is, be horribly afraid, or terribly affrighted with horror, and great fear; because*

in extremity of horrou the hair does shew it, by standing as it were straight up, through great fear. And if the heavens are called upon to be thus horribly affrighted, because of this, how much more should sinners be so, who have done, and do this? it follows, *and be ye desolate, saith the Lord*, that is, by withdrawing, or by the loss of your Heavenly light; and why all this? *v. 13. for my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

2. A great God, yea and a great King, above *Psalms. 95. 3. & 145. 3.* all Gods, whose greatness is unsearchable: and for him to be turn'd aside from, and to turn our backs upon, and so to be despised, how sad must this needs be? *I am small*, says David, and despised, *Psalms 119. 141.* and *Matth. 18. 10.* Take heed, says our Saviour, *ye despise not one of these little ones*; but for such as we, to despise a God so infinitely great, O how sinful is it!

3. A glorious God, yea the God of Glory, the father of glory, one who is clothed with Majesty and glory, *Psal. 104. 1.* he whom the Angels adore, and before whom the Devils are forced to tremble; and such a God to be forsaken?

4. A good God, abundant, yea infinite in goodness, *for how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty? Zach. 9. 17.* yea goodness it self, and good to all, having made them, preserving them, and continually providing for them, and so the God to whom they are so in-

finutely and so many wayes ingaged, and obliged.

Rom. i. 25.

Shaddai

is as much as who is sufficient, or all-sufficient, having in himself, and for others an abundant sufficiency.

Qui sibi sufficiens, nullius indigens, & omnibus creaturis, omnis boni existens fons, & sufficientia.

Parens.

5. The blessed God, yea *blessed for ever.*

6. An all sufficient God; as he told Abraham, *Gen. 17. 1. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, or God All-sufficient, walk before me, and be thou perfect,* that is, upright, sincere. The

word in the Hebrew, which we render Almighty, signifies not onely one that hath great power, yea all power, but also one that hath an all-sufficiency in himself, and that both for himself and others: and thus the Lord is such a God, as does everlastingly, independently, and unchangeably possess an infinite all-sufficiency in himself, and for himself; and a full and overflowing all-sufficiency for the creature. So that there is no need, nor any cause to go from him, for any good; no, there is more need to go from the Sea for water, from the Sun for light, from the Sea shore for sand, from the fire for heat: *Psalm 84. 11. For the Lord God is a Sun; and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work, 2 Cor. 9. 8.* Some derive the Hebrew *Shaddai* from *Shad*, a dug, or breast, it being he indeed that suckles, feeds and provides for all creatures, &c. And O how easily and quickly can that full Ocean fill such poor empty, scanty vessels as we are? and now to forsake and turn aside, and depart from such a God, how evil a thing

thing is it, and how sad must it needs be? *Paul* complains of the turning away of some from him, and forsaking him, 2 *Tim.* 1. 15. — 4. 10, 16. but what is it then to turn away and forsake God, and such a God? we may well cry out with the Prophet *Jeremy*, 17. 13. *O Lord the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed and they that depart from thee shall be written in the earth; because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.*

2. The sinfulness of this will the more appear, if we do but consider, that this forsaking of God, and turning aside, and going away from him, is without cause, and without all colour of true reason or ground, as the Scripture does most pathetically express it: as *Jer.* 2. 5. *What iniquity (says the Lord) have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? As if the Lord had said, What cause or ground have I given you, or what colour of reason can ye pretend, that you should thus go away from me? if you have any, alledg it, produce it. And v. 31. — Have I (says the Lord) been a wilderness to Israel, a land of Darkness? &c. No, what he was to them, and did for them, he tells them v. 6, 7. so *Micah* 6. 3. *O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me, &c.* Surely darkness may sooner proceed from the Sun, than any iniquity or obliquity proceed from God: — a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he, *Deut.* 32. 4.*

Ephes. 2. 2.

2 Pet. 2. 10.

2 Pet. 3. 3.

Jude 18.

Jonah 2. 8.

1 Sam. 12. 21.

Prov. 25. 4, 5.

Quid est impenitentis vita, quam periculosa à Deo alienatio, Angelorum offensio, & servitus Diabolica. &c.

Quid magis horrendum posset excogitari, quam præponerem adeo vilem Deo creatori. *Granatenfis.*

3. The sin and great iniquity of this yet further appears, if we do but consider, while we have and do forsake, and turn aside, and go away from God, who or what it is that we have and do turn aside to, and go away after. And this is that which heaven and earth may be astonished at, for it is after sin, after the flesh, after our vile lusts and lealing, and lying vanities, yea after Satan, after the Devil. 1 Tim. 1. 15. *For some are already turned aside after Satan, and so after hell, death, perdition, and destruction, and at best it is but after the creature, after vain things which cannot profit, nor deliver, things that are not, that are vanity, yea vanity of vanities, i. e. vainest vanity, as Solomon long since, upon the utmost proof and experiment of them, hath left upon record, and that again and again, Eccles. 1. 2. 14. --- 2. 17. --- 12. 8. &c. And what an evil and bitter thing is this? and what iniquity and sin is there in it? that God, and such a God, God blessed for ever, a God of all and infinite perfections, should be turned aside, and gone away from, and the back turn'd upon, and it h' mean time sin, and the flesh, and the vile lusts thereof, yea the Devil himself, and death, and hell turn'd to, and gone after! what, for God to be left for the creature? All-sufficiency it self forsaken for vanity? Fulness for emptiness and indigency? Yea sin and Satan, and a man's vile lusts preferred before the Lord of life and glory! O well may the heavens be astonished at this, and be horribly afraid, yea be very desolate; and so shall the sinner too, such despisers shall*

shall behold another day, and *wonder and perish.*

Use 2. This it speaks our misery, that we are all by nature turn'd aside, and gone away from God, and such a God as you have heard but now describ'd; yea that God, whose face and presence makes heaven, and is the heaven of heaven, for heaven is not God's happiness, but God is heavens happiness, *whom have I in heaven but thee?* that God, with whom is the fountain of life, *in whose favour is life, yea whose favour is better than life,* and who is alone the sole, sovereign, suitable, all-sufficient, and eternal good of the soul. And that which further advances and adds to this misery, is this, that we being turn'd aside, and gone away from God, he also is departed and gone away from us, so that now by nature we are said to be without God in the world, and to be estranged and far from him. I mean in regard of his special and gracious presence, and what inspeakable, yea unconceivable misery does this speak? there is a woe with an Emphasis put upon this, --- *yea woe also to them, when I depart from them:* this is last brought in as the sorest and heaviest evil, and even perfection of their miseries, and which indeed in the perfect completion thereof will be the very hell of hell, that there must be a *departure from God*, and a being *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*, &c. --- *for loe, they that are far from thee shall perish,* &c. Certainly the world is not so sad without the Sun, the earth without rain, the body without the soul, as the soul without God, who

Psal. 73. 25.

--- 50. 5.

--- 65. 3.

Hosea 9. 11.
12.

Matth. 25. 41.

2 Thes. 1. 9.

Pf. 73. 28.

who is more the life of the soul, than the Soul is the life of the body. *Saul* spake truly as to that, when he said, *I am sore distressed, the Philistins making war against him, and God being departed from him, 1 Sam. 28:15. Job 34:29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? &c.* And when God goes away, all good must needs also go away with him, and all evils break in, as the Lord threatens that people upon their forsaking him, and breaking that covenant he had made with them, *Deut. 31:17. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them: and what then? and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, &c.* And how can it be otherwise, when their defence is departed from them?

Use 2. This shews the absolute & indispensable necessity of being turn'd again, if ever we be saved, if ever we enter into heaven, and enjoy God for ever. Why? because by nature we are all turn'd aside, and turn'd away from these, and have our backs upon them, and how can we, unless we be turn'd again, ever come to partake of them? Can a man, unless he turn, ever come to a place that he hath his back upon, and is going away from? as can he come to a place in the East, that has his back upon it, and is going a quite contrary way to a place in the West? And can a man, unless he turn again, and be converted, ever come to heaven, that has his back upon

on heaven, & is going as fast as he can in the ways that lead to hell, in a quite opposite and contrary way and course? it cannot be. And therefore this shews the absolute and indispensable necessity of being turn'd again, of being converted, if ever we go to heaven, if ever we be saved, and come to enjoy God for ever: and hence, says our Saviour, *Matth. 18. 3. Except you be converted and become as little children*, (for it is a change not of place, but of disposition, that is required here) *ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven*; and indeed ye cannot, for till ye are converted, your backs are upon it, and ye are going on in a quite opposite way to it. Can any go to heaven with their backs upon heaven? No: *except ye repent*, says Christ, *ye shall all likewise perish*; and --- *turn ye, turn ye*, says the Lord, *from your evill ways; for why will ye dye, O house of Israel?* As if the Lord should have said, How can ye live, unless ye turn, that have your backs upon life, and are going on in the ways that lead unto death? And therefore this being our condition by nature, that we are all turn'd aside and turn'd away from God, and our sin and misery being so great by reason thereof, O let us never rest, 'till we come to be turn'd again; there being nothing that we are more concern'd in than this: and though we cannot turn our selves, yet let's set upon it, and earnestly beg of God to do it, as these here do, *Turn us again, &c.*

Luke 13. 3, 5.
Ezek. 33. 11.

Doctr. 2. *Such as are already turn'd to God, and brought home to him, are yet very prone to turn again aside from him.*

And

Psal. 119. 176.

1 Joh. 3. 9.

Jer. 32. 40.

Psal. 85. 8.

And this is observable from the words, as they refer to those who had been turn'd to God, but had in some measure declin'd and made defection, and therefore they pray that God would *turn them again* : which shews, that this is that which the people of God themselves are very subject to. *Hof. 11. 7. My people are bent to backsliding from me, &c. Exod. 32. 8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way. I have gone astray, says David, like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, &c.* Indeed such as are truly and really turn'd again to God, and brought home to him, such never do nor can totally nor finally fall away from him, because *his seed remains in them*, and he hath by an everlasting covenant, which he hath made with them, undertaken for the contrary. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, &c.* But they may in some measure, and for a season, they may fall foully, though not finally, partially though not totally. It is that they are prone and of themselves inclin'd to, as appears, 1. From our own sad experience : Have we not all too too sad experience of this? that we have all revolting hearts, that though we are through grace turn'd to God, and brought home to him, yet we are very ready to decline again. 2. It appears from the examples of some of the most eminent of Saints : as *David*, a man after God's own heart, *Solomon*, *Peter*, and *others*. 3. From those many caveats and admonitions in Scripture given to the contrary. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people,*
and

and to his Saints, but let them not turn again to folly. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: & let us hold fast our profession, &c. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. And how often does our Saviour himself call upon his Disciples to take heed? and so his Apostles after him call upon others; but whence is it? it is 1. from the remainers of inbred corruption, and a deceitful heart yet within, and 2. from a subtle Devil without, and 3. an enticing deceitful world. James 1. 14. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. --- A deceived heart hath turned him aside: and the heart is deceitful above all things, &c. And the Devil is all for turning us aside, and perverting our wayes, he is full of his wiles and devices to this purpose. And 4. the world, either by its smiles or its frowns, is furthering of this. 2 Tim. 4. 10. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, &c.

Use 1. Let us then bewail, and be exceedingly humbled in the sight and sense of this: O that there should be yet such a principle within us of Apostacy from God, and such a God, the living God, and our God and father in Jesus Christ! O how should we bewail this?

2. Let us not then be high-minded, but fear, with a godly fear, oppos'd to pride, as the Apostle exhorts, Rom. 11. 20. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith,

Heb. 3. 12.

—4. 14.

—10. 23.

2 Pet. 3. 17.

Ic. 44. 20.

Jer. 17. 9.

2 Cor. 6. 11.

Eph. 6. 11.

In honore qui
demissus est,
non ideo in-
dignum se ho-
nore præbet,
quia ea ratio
sola est alendo-
rum honorum,
honore medio-
criter uti, tem-
peranter om-
nia, nihil fastu-
ose agere.

Non vult time-
re, non seotimo-
re, qui contra-
rius fidei, sed
piæ sollicitu-
dinis, nos ad
perseveranti-
am, ad preces,
& ad reveren-
tiam Dei sti-
mulante. *Tos-
san.*

faith, be not high minded but fear. For thou al-
so art inclined to unbelief, and it is not for any
worth, nor from any strength of thy own, that
thou standest, and therefore be not high minded;
this is a notable help against Apostacy: for 1.
God hath a great deal of respect for such, *Pf.*
138. 6. 2. *Dwels with such, Isaiah 57. 15.*
3. *Guides such, Pf. 25. 9.* 4. *Saves such, Job.*
22. 29. 5. *Hears such, Psalm 10. 17.* and
6. *Gives grace to such, more grace, 1 Pet. 5. 5.*
Prov. 3. 34. A man's pride (says Solomon) shall
bring him low, but honour shall uphold the hum-
ble in spirit, Prov. 29. 23. that is, that which
is his grace, and honour, and ornament, shall
uphold him. The Dutch read it, *the humble in*
spirit shall hold honour fast, that is, he shall sure-
ly get and retain it in the sight of God and good
men, and he is likeliest to hold God fast, and
Religion fast, and his profession fast, and his
ways fast. And let us therefore fear (says the
Apostle) *Hebr. 4. 1. lest a promise being left us*
of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to
come short of it: with a fear of care, not of dif-
fidence; of caution, not of vexation; with a fear
oppos'd to presumption, high-mindedness, and
hardness of heart, not to consolation and cou-
rage of heart, and this is a holy and blessed fear
indeed; and happy is the man that thus feareth
always, but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall
into mischief, *Prov. 28. 14.*

Use 3. Let us make that use hereof, that the
Apostle puts us upon, *Gal. 6. 1. Brethren, if a*
man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiri-
tual

Sovereign way of being saved.

61

tual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, why? considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted.

Use 4. Being so prone and ready to turn again aside from God, let us so much the more labour and endeavour to keep with him; and to help us herein, let me propound these five or six things. As 1. let us press upon our hearts these following considerations.

1. The neer and dear relation that we stand in to God, I mean of us as are true believers indeed; and let that prevail with us the more to keep with him, and not to turn away from him: why? because he is our God, and Father, and husband, and friend &c. we are as it were espoused and married to him. And should a people go from their God, children from their father, *If. 54. 5.* the wife from her husband, a man forsake his *Jer. 31. 32.* friend? *Thine own friend, and thy fathers* *Prov. 27. 10.* friend forsake not, &c.

2. That there is no just cause nor ground, why we should go from him. 1. There being no iniquity in him, nor ever any injury done unto us by him. --- *What iniquity have your fathers* *Jer. 2. 5.* *found in me. O my people what have I done unto* *Micah 6. 3.* *thee? wherein have I wearied thee? &c.* 2. There being no want of any good in him, so that there is no need to go from him, he being all-sufficient: hence the Lord reasons the case with *David*, when he had revolted, and tels him, I did so and so for thee, and I gave such and such things to thee, and if that had been too little, says the Lord, I would moreover have given thee

thee such and such things, and wherefore then hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, &c. what cause or ground was there for it? what hast thou to say, or what canst thou alledge? So we find that the children of Israel disobeying the voice of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord, that is, the Son of God, he pleads with them; I have done so and so for you, why then have ye done this? and there being no true cause nor ground for it, they answer with tears, for it is said, that they lift up their voice and wept.

Judges 2. 4.

3. Can we mend or better our selves? and who would change but for the better? But to be sure, if we go from God, it will be for the worse. When many that profess themselves the disciples of Christ, went back, and Christ said to the twelve, *Will ye also go away?* you know what Simon Peter answered the Lord, *To whom should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?* As if he had said, Lord, where can we mend our selves, to whom shall we go to be better? This was the Argument that Samuel made use of, to keep the people from turning aside, to follow the Lord.

John 6. 68.

1 Sam. 12. 21.

And turn ye not aside, for then should you go after vain things which cannot profit, nor deliver, for they are vain. It is as if a man for warmth should go from the Sun to the shade, or for water from the fountain to the broken cistern, or from the spring to the puddle; or as if a man for fresh air should leave the open field, and sweet refreshing gales in a garden, to go to a smoaky cottage: *But my people have changed their*

their glory for that which doth not profit, and they Jer. 2. 11.
 are gone far from me, and walked after vanity.
 Will a man leave the pleasant cooling snow of Jer. 18. 14.
 mount Lebanon, for a dry bare rock of the field,
 or shall the cool flowing waters be forsaken?

4. Let's consider what respect God has for
 such as abide with him, and turn not aside from
 him. Noah was upright in his generation, and Gen. 6. 8.
 walked with God, when all flesh had corrupted
 their way, and it is said, Noah found grace in the
 eyes of the Lord. So, my servant Caleb, because Numb. 14. 24.
 he had another spirit with him, and hath follow-
 ed me fully, him will I bring into the Land, &c.
 And ye are they (says Christ) which have conti- Luke 22. 28,
 nued with me in my temptations, and I appoint un- 29.
 to you a kingdom, &c. Rev. 3. 5.

5. What a comfort will this be in the evil
 day, and at the hour of death, if we have not
 turned back from God, as it has been to the peo-
 ple of God formerly? *Pf. 44. 17, 18, 19. Job*
23. 11, 12. and Is. 38. 3. &c.

6. The Lord doth not turn away our prayers,
 nor himself, nor his mercy from us, and why Psal. 66. 20.
 should we turn away from him? yea he hath Jer. 32. 40.
 made an everlasting covenant with us, that he
 will not turn away from us to do us good, &c.

7. If ever he do turn away from us for a
 time, it is not till we first turn away from him.
 He is first in coming, but last in going, he is ever
 with us, while we are with him, as the Prophet
 told *Asa, 2 Chron. 15. 2.* but if we forsake
 him, and turn away from him, he will turn a-
 way from us, yea against us, as the Church
 com.

complains, *Lam. 3. 3. Surely against me is he turned, he turneth his hand against me all the day.*

2. Let us be 1. vigilant, and very circumspect: else if we be careless, negligent, and secure, we shall be in great danger to miscarry; *1 Cor. 10. 12. wherefore let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall.* None are likelier to fall than such as are most self confident, and secure, and therefore let us carry a holy jealousy continually over our selves: how many caveats have we in Scripture to this purpose? *Matth. 26. 41. Luke 21. 36. Heb. 3. 12. &c.*

3. Let us be much in prayer, that the Lord would keep us; for if he leave us, we shall soon leave him. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, &c.* he alone is able, and therefore we must watch and pray both, &c.

4. Let us remember and urge the Lord with his promise, *viz. that he will put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him, and that we shall not turn away from him.*

5. Let us exhort one another daily, &c. This the Apostle prescribes as a good help, to keep us from departing from God. *Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily; while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin: and Heb. 10. 25. Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, --but exhorting one another, &c.*

6. Let us in the strength of Christ, and begging help of God, take up strong, settled, and sincere

sincere resolutions of heart to cleave to the Lord; and to continue and abide with him, who ever turn aside from him; as *Joshua*, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord: this, that good man *Barnabas* exhorted those to, that believed and turned to the Lord, *that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*. And when at any time we have, or do turn aside, as we are very prone to do, let us never rest till we return again; as these here, how earnest are they upon this? they thrice importune, *Turn us again, &c.* O should not a people return to their God, the spouse to her husband, children to their father? The Prodigal, as soon as ever he came to himself, he resolves, *I will arise, and go to my father*. Turn, O back-sliding children, saith the Lord; why? for I am married unto you. And it can never be well with us indeed, till we do this, he being the rest, and true and proper center, and chief good of the Soul: *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul, &c.* he is our utmost and ultimate good, so that the soul hath no further to go, when once it is come to him, but is as the stone when it is come to the earth, which is its center. But as for all else, there is still something beyond them, but nothing beyond God, and therefore it was well thought of, of those, that resolved to go and return to their first husband, for then was it better with them than now: and if we return to him, he hath promised to heal our backslidings. *Return ye back-sliding children, and I will heal your backslidings*, pardon the backslidings past, and prevent them for the future.

Joshua 24. 15.

Acts 11. 23.

Luke 15. 17.
18.

Jer. 3. 14.

Ps. 116. 7.

Hosea 2. 7.

Jer. 2. 27.

And

And who would not say as they? *behold we come come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

Doctr. 3. *The Lord is the God of hosts.*

All creatures are (as it were) his hosts, his armies, under his power, and at his command and absolute dispose, to imploy as he pleases, as soldiers under their General; and the Lord hath his hosts above, and his hosts beneath, and all at his beck, and this is a title often given to God: we have it four times in this Psalm, yea *Zach.* 1. 3. thrice in one verse, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you saith the Lord of hosts,* and it is an attribute, that sets forth God's all-mighty power, soveraignty, and greatness.

Psalm 33. 8.

Use 1. Let us then fear him, *Let all the earth fear him, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him: why? he is the Lord of hosts.*

—52. 17. *The charrets of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels the Lord is among them, &c. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? for to thee doth it appertain, &c. And fear*

Jerem. 10. 7 *ye not me, saith the Lord? O thou even thou art*
—5. 22. *to be feared, &c. Psalm 76. 7.*

Use 2. Take we heed then how we provoke him, we are no match for him. *Do we provoke the Lord, says the Apostle, are we stronger than he? can we wage war with him, or carry it against him? What King, says our Saviour, going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand, &c. In the*

Job 4. 31.

2 Chron.

2 Chron. 14. 9. we read there of a very great host, an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; but how great is God's host, whose are all the hosts in heaven and earth, and whose chariots are twenty thousand, &c. and therefore stand in awe, and sin not; provoke him not, or if we do, let us not stand it out, but presently submit, for can thine heart (says God) endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?

Pf. 4. 4.

Ezek. 22. 14.

Use 3. See here the way to have the creatures at peace with us; it is to have the Lord, whose hosts and armies they are, and who is their General, at peace with us.

Tranquillus
Deus tranquillat omnia.

Use 4. Let his people then trust in him. Pf. 84. 120. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee, &c.

Use 5. Let this, in their addresses unto him, strengthen their faith, and encourage their hope, as to what they go to him for, as it did theirs here: O what cannot the Lord God of hosts do, and effect for his people! &c.

Use 6. Let this prevail with us all to repent and turn to him, because he is the Lord of hosts, because of his Almighty power, Sovereignty, and greatness. And this he himself makes use of, as an argument thereunto. Therefore say unto them, thus saith the Lord of hosts, turn ye unto me saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts. Surely there is much in this, to back and enforce this duty, that the Lord makes use of it thrice in one verse. Shall we not turn, when such a God commands? who being

Zach. 1. 3.
Quod toties
repetit Pro-
pheta nomen
Dei, emphati-
cum est, ut sci-
licet doctrina
acrius pun-
gat. Calvin.

Amos 4. 13.

the Lord of hosts, is so able to save us, and succour us, and do us good, if we do repent and turn to him, or to punish and destroy us if we do not. *Lo, it is he that formeth the mountains, that createth the wind, &c. the Lord, the God of hosts is his name.*

Doctr. 4. *The Lord God of hosts is he, and he alone, that can turn a people again unto himself.*

Deus converte
hos : averſi e-
nim ſumus à
te, & niſi tu
convertas, non
convertemur.
*Auguſt. in lo-
cuto.*

Pſalm 60. 1.

That can turn them at first, and turn them again being turn'd aside; and therefore to him, and him alone, do these here address themselves, both for turning those that were never yet turn'd, as also for turning of those again that were turned, but had gone aside. *Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts.* Thus they pray, as being sensible of their own and others utter disability for to turn them without the Lord, and therefore they apply themselves to him, conversion being no less than the work of an Almighty power, of an omnipotent God, even of him *who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, whose name is the Lord God of Hosts.* He must first turn to us, as the Church prays, *O turn thy self to us again!* before we can turn to him; he must first turn to us by his grace, and powerful operation of his Spirit, before we can turn to him by repentance. We can easily indeed, and of our selves, turn away from God, we are bent and prone to this; and sin, and Satan, and the world, and every vanity can easily do this, but the Lord God of hosts

hosts can onely turn us again. This indeed is the great work and business of us who are Ministers, to endeavour this, but we can never effect this without the Lord. *2 Kings 6.27.* As that King of *Israel*, answered the woman that cried to him for help: *if the Lord do not help, whence shall I help thee? 2 Tim. 2. 25.* In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance. We return and repent, but grace, power, and ability to do it is from God. *Acts 11. 21.* And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Paul shewed unto them of *Damascus*, and at all places where he came, that they should repent; and turn to God, but it was God enabled them thereto, *Acts 26. 20.* Hence says *Ephraim*, Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote on my thigh, &c. *Jer. 31. 19.* So *Lam. 5. 21.* Turn thou us unto thee O Lord, and we shall be turned, &c.

Use 1. See what folly then it is to procrastinate, and put off repentance, as if it was in our own power to repent and turn when we pleased, whereas it is in God's power alone; and therefore as the holy Ghost saith, to day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, &c. *Heb. 3. 7, 8.*

Use 2. Let this make us the more careful how we turn aside from God, because though we of our selves can turn away from him, he onely can turn us again to him.

Use 3. As ever then we would that our selves, or ours, should be turn'd again, let us apply our selves

- Pl. 119. 176. selves to him, as these do here, *turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts. I have gone astray, says David, like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, &c.* We can lose our selves, but we must have recourse to God to reduce us, and fetch us home. O Lord
 Jer. 10. 23. *I know the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, and therefore let us cry with Ephraim, --- Turn thou me, O*
 Jer. 3. 18. *Lord, and I shall be turned, &c.*

Use 4. Then when we are turned again, see here to whom to ascribe it, and to whom to give the praise and glory of it, even to the *Lord God of hosts* : It is his work, he has done it, and none else, but he could do it, and therefore let him have the glory of it alone.

Doctr. 5. *When the Lord turns a people again to himself, he causes his face to shine.*

He manifests his favour, and shews himself gracious, and propitious : for these two are here joyned together, *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause thy face to shine.* And this latter may be considered, either as the efficient, or as that which as an effect, follows upon the former, or as both. So that when the Lord turns a people or a person to himself, 1. he does cause his face to shine, and 2. when he has turn'd a people again to himself, he will cause his face to shine, that is, he will more and more cause it to shine, more and more manifest his favour ; and to both these I shall speak something briefly.

1. He then does cause his face to shine, when

when he turns them again to himself, he then remembers them with the favour that he bears to his people, and lifts up upon them the light of his countenance, saving conversion being a blessed effect, and happy fruit thereof, and it being his special favour and grace that puts him upon it. *I will heal* (saith the Lord) *their back-slidings*: and whence will he do it, what puts him upon it? his love; *I will love them freely*, for his anger is turned away from him. We are bid to seek God's face, to seek his favour, and such have found it, and the Lord hath dealt very graciously with them: but it is not thus as to the things of the world, they in their very quintessence, and though in their greatest confluence, do not simply of themselves speak God's love and favour, no, but for all them, though in never so great abundance, men may be under God's frowns, and have none of his favour, but hatred and abhorrence; for God's heart here does not always go along with his hand, God's giving hand and his gracious favourable accepting hand are two distinct things, and so is his permissive and his promissive approving Providence. Men may have Quails, and wrath; the daintiest viands, and vengeance; coin, and the curse; heap up wealth and worldly treasures, *have more than heart could wish*, and yet be under God's sore displeasure. *I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease*. God's bringing these things abundantly into mens hands, is no argument nor intimation of the love of his heart: *The tabernacles of Robbers prosper, and they that*

Cum convertit faciem suam Deus ad nos, & nos respiciet, tum ad eum convertimur. Hosea 14. 4.

Pœnitentia est effectus gratiæ, fluentis a dilectione Dei, in filio Dei fundatâ. *Parans in locum.*

Ex largitate, non ex promissio.

Num. 11. 33. Psalm 33. 7.

Zach. 1. 15. Irâ magnâ irascor.

Job 12. 6.

provoke God are secure, into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. *Pf. 73. 12.* Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase in riches, &c. and yet such, whom God hates and abhors. *Psalms 12. 5.* — But the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth: and *Psalms 5. 5.* — Thou hatest all workers of iniquity, and — God is angry with the wicked every day, *Pf. 7. 11.* So that these things are no sign of God's favour, neither in any or all of them does his face shine, or is the light of his countenance lift up: but now saving conversion, and God's turning of a man again to himself, this ever speaks God's favour, and the shine of his face, and the lifting up upon him the light of his countenance; and though such a one may have but little of these things in his hand, this is a sure intimation to him of the love of God's heart, and this makes the little (though it be never so little) that such a one hath, better than the riches of many wicked. *Pf. 37. 16.* for better (says Solomon) is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled Oxe and hatred therewith. *Prov. 15. 17.* And this makes it that it can never be ill with a godly man, how little soever he have of these things, because he has still God's love; and that it can never be well with a wicked man, how much soever he has of these things, because he has ever God's hatred therewith, and the evil things of the one being turn'd into good, and the good things of the other being turn'd into evil. *Pf. 25. 10. Rom. 8. 28. Pf. 69. 22. Pro. 1. 32.*

Boni nunquam
in statu malo,
nam illis vel
ipsa mala ver-
tuntur in bo-
num; mali
contra nun-
quam in statu
bono, quia illis
vel ipsa bona
vertuntur in
malum. Gry-
oss.

2. The Lord will cause his face to shine, yea
more

more and more to shine on a people or person that he turns again to himself. For 1. it is his promise so to do, to be gracious and to manifest his favour to such. *Job 33.23. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter one of a thousand to shew unto man his uprightness,* the Hebrew, his rectitude, that is, what is right and straight, viz. to repent and turn to God: *Dutch* read it, *to declare unto man his right duty,* as indeed conversion and true turning to God it is our duty, and it is a right, just, and equal duty, and it brings us into a right state, into a right frame, sets us at rights, and till then our state is wretched, crooked, and wrong, nothing is at rights; for how should things be right with us, whiles our hearts and ways are not right with God? but when that which is so right is shewn to man, and shewn powerfully and effectually, so as to embrace and do what is made known and shewn. Then it follows, *v. 26. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy, &c.* The Lord is very gracious, and of a very kind nature and disposition, he has always in himself a rich storehouse of kindness and mercy, and then he gives it forth, *Come and let us return unto the Lord, Hosea 6. 1.* and then *v. 2. we shall live in his sight,* or in or before his face, live and enjoy his love and favour, the life of our lives. *He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;* that is, if any truly repent, what then? *his life shall see the light,* he shall live in the light of God's countenance.

Job 23.27,28;

Thus

Gratiam qui
invenit apud
Deum, ab eâ
primum in-
ventus est, quia
eam nemo
quærit; quem
ea prius non
quæserit, &
admiseric.

Conditio ad
gratiam reci-
piendam re-
quisita, non po-
nitur in nobis,
nisi per gratiâ
prævenientem,
Parens.

Thus the Lord waits to be gracious, he waits for our repentings and turnings to him, that he may be gracious, and while we retard our repentings and turnings to him, we retard his grace and favour from our selves. There is indeed a previous preventing grace and favour of God, a first shining of God's face, and breaking forth of the light of his countenance, as in the conversion of a sinner, which I hinted before, when God puts a stop to a poor sinner, and gives him to repent and turn to him; there is a time of love, and then God causes his face to shine, when he says to the sinner *even in his blood, live*: but then after this previous preventing favour and grace, there is more grace, second Acts, as it were, and renewed manifestations; we upon our repenting and turning to God being put into such an estate, as in which he owns us, and delights in us, and is gracious to us. How gracious was the Lord to *Peter*? upon his repenting and turning again, he was gracious to him before, *Luke 22. 61. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, &c.* and how gracious after? *Mark 16. 7. ---tell his disciples and Peter, &c.* And so to *Ephraim*, upon repenting and turning, how abundantly did God manifest his grace and favour, how lovingly, and meltingly, and tenderly does he speak of him? *Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. Is Ephraim my dear son, &c. My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy on him.* And so the Prodigal upon his returning, how does the father *meet him, and falls on his neck, and kisses him*!

2. Then

2. Then that is removed which interposes between us and God's favour, and hinders the shinings of his face, I mean our sins, for they and onely they do this. *Is. 59. 2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you,* & therefore when we are turned again from our sins to God, his face must needs shine. What should hinder? when the clouds are dispell'd and scattered, the Sun appears, and its light breaks forth.

Luke 15. 17,
18, 19, 20, &c.

Use 1. Blessed and thrice happy are they then, whom the Lord hath turned again to himself; for unto them he hath, and will more and more be gracious, and manifest his favour, and cause his face to shine: *Blessed is the man whom thou chooshest, and caushest to approach to thee,* &c. *Pf. 65. 4.* For he shares in that, and partakes of that which is man's happiness, and renders him blessed; as appears in that form, which the Lord prescribes of blessing the children of *Israel*, *Numb. 6. 22, 23, &c.* and this makes his present state and condition so comfortable; one day of a repenting sinner, and so of a sinner that is reconciled to God, and to whom he vouchsafes his favour, being more comfortable than a thousand years of another man that is in continual fear of death and judgment.

Use 2. As ever then we would make it out indeed to our own souls, that we have any clear evidence or comfortable demonstration of God's favour, of his love, and the light of his countenance,

nance, let us never rest, 'till we find our selves to be indeed such, that the Lord hath turn'd again to himself; and then he hath and will cause his face to shine. *David prays, Ps. 86. 17. Shew me a token for good,* and here's a token for good indeed, for the chief good, the greatest good, God's favour, which is life, yea better than life. Saving conversion, is ever a sure sign of divine affection, and of a work of grace upon the heart, of a souls having found favour in God's eyes; our being turned unto God clearly evidences his having in favour turn'd to us, and that he will more and more so turn to us. And therefore how earnest and solicitous should we be for that, which gives us so clear an evidence, and sure demonstration of so great a good, even of the favour of God? but never let any bear themselves up with what is consistent with God's hatred, and with wrath, and eternal death, as the honours, and profits, and pleasures of the world are, which men may wallow in the fulness of, and yet be under divine frowns, and which for the most part are cast upon the worst and vilest of men, and upon those whom God's soul abhors, which made the very heathens condemn them being cast upon such dunghills. But saving conversion is ever an effect of, and followed with divine smiles, and on such the Lord God of hosts hath and will more and more cause his face to shine.

Si conversi fuerimus per poenitentiam, ille omnium placatissimus, & benignissimus; convertentes ad se, recipiet.
Musc.

In hoc coenum, in has sordes.
Seneca.

CHAP. V.

*The main, chief, and principal point of
Doctrine observable from the words.*

DOctr. 6. *The onely way for a people to be saved, it is for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine:* That is, as hath been open'd and explain'd, for God to convert them from their sins to himself; and his ways, and to vouchsafe them his favour, to be gracious, and propitious to them in his son: this is the onely way of a peoples weal, it consists in their sound conversion to God, and in their finding grace and favour with God; in their being turn'd again unto him, and in his turning unto them, as the Lord expresses it. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, turn ye unto me, —and I will turn unto you.* For them to turn to him repentingly, and for him to turn to them graciously, these two do the work as to their weale, they turn all evil away from them, and set all good a coming towards them; the sanctifying grace of God renewing, and his accepting grace graciously receiving; the sincerity of a peoples repentance, and the serenity of God's countenance; the effectual working of God's grace, and the favourable shining of his face; this is the very way for a people to be saved, and this I shall illustrate in several particulars.

Zach. 1:3

1. This

Ezra 8. 21.

1. This is the right way, the true and proper way for a people to be sav'd. It is said of *Ezra*, that he proclaimed a fast, &c. to seek of the Lord a right way for them, and their little ones, and all their substance; and here's that right way indeed, for us, and ours, and others, for all, for our little ones, and all our substance, for all we have or enjoy, and if the Lord delight in us, (as *Joshua* and *Caleb* said of the Land of *Canaan*;) he will bring us into this way, which he who is just and right, yea the most upright, prescribes: and surely were we our selves, and in our right minds, we would betake our selves to this, as the onely right way of all our weal and happines.

Numb. 14. 8.

2. It is a sure soveraign way, a prevalent way, an effectual way, it never fails nor falls short, and that let a peoples present state and condition be what it will, seem it never so sad and desperate, yet if the Lord do but turn them again, and cause his face to shine, they shall be saved, yea they cannot but be saved, as these undoubtedly here do promise to themselves.

Jonah 3. 3.

3. It is an experienc'd way, a well prov'd and tried way, a way that hath many *probatum est's* upon it: for never was there people, or person, that God did indeed turn to himself, and cause his face to shine upon, but they were saved. *Niniveh* that great city was within 40 days to have been destroyed; But God seeing their works, that they turn'd from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not: and although the children

dren of Israel forsaking the Lord, and serving other Gods, the Lord tels them, that he would deliver them no more, but bids them go and cry unto the Gods that they had chosen, &c. yet they Judg. 10. 13, 14, 15, 16. putting away the strange Gods from among them and serving the Lord, his soul was grieved for their misery. And what an ill case do we find Israel to be in? 2 Chron. 15. 3. it is said, that for a long season they had been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law: and yet v. 4. when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord, and sought him, he was found of them. So God hearing Ephraim to bemoan himself, and to repent, his bowels are troubled for him, or earns towards him, as the mothers towards her child; and now I will surely, says the Lord, have mercy on him, and now he must think of, and prepare for his return. Set thee up way-marks, &c. So in Hosea 14. the Lord there bids Israel take with them words, and turn Hosea 14. 1, 2. to the Lord, and say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, and then they resolve, so will we render the calves of our lips, that is, the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving: and such indeed shall have cause, for it cannot but be well with them. Thus whatever proofs, whatever assays have been made in this kind, whether formerly or lately, they have done, they have been found effectual, as to a peoples being saved; and never was it yet known, that ever a people or a person, truly turning again unto God, and being graciously received of him, did miscarry; let any produce

Job 9. 4.

an instance if they can. Look, as he being *wise in heart, and mighty in strength, none ever hardened themselves against him and prosper'd*; so he being great in kindness; and rich in mercy, none ever turn'd to him but were saved.

Psalm 29. 11.

4. This is the way to be saved in mercy, so to be saved as to be blest with Salvation, as the Lord promises to his people as concerning peace, *that he will bless them therewith.* It is one thing to have peace, and salvation, and deliverance, and mercies, and another thing to be blest with them, and to have them in mercy, and as mercies; and this latter is the greater; many have these, but few are blest with these: but when God so saves a people as to turn them again, and cause his face to shine, then they are sav'd in mercy, so as to be blest with their being saved, (I speak now of temporal salvation,) then *in love to their souls God delivers them*, as it is said of *Hezekiah*. And they are not so saved, as afterward to be destroyed, as it is said of the people that the Lord sav'd out of the land of Egypt, *that afterward he destroyed them that believed not.*

Is. 38. 17.

Jude 4.

5. This is the way to be sav'd universally, and that in a threefold respect: 1. which way soever we take or understand being saved. For this word *saved* is very comprehensive, and of large extent, denoting not onely the privative part of happiness, (though that most properly, as freedom from enemies, and evils of all sorts) but the positive also, as the fruition of all good: and hence is it here variously read, and rendred; we read it, *we shall be saved*, others, *blessed, happy,*

happy, or it shall be well with us, and all things shall happily succeed to us, or we shall be safe and secure, and in a good case and condition; we shall live, and reign, and want no good thing. And now which way soever we take or understand it, or which way soever we read or render it, this here reaches and takes in all, and all follow upon this; God's turning us again, and causing his face to shine, and when he is pleas'd to do this, to vouchsafe these, we may write under it what ever we will, that tends indeed to our weal, and makes for our good.

Servabimur;
salvi erimus;
beati, verè felices, omnia nobis feliciter cedent, vivemus, & regnabimus, nec ullo bono destitue-
mur.

2. This is the way to have all saved, Kingdom saved, Nation saved, Church saved, Court saved, City saved, Countrey saved, Towns, Families, persons, our selves, ours, others, our relations, our little ones; to have bodies saved, souls, religion, lives, liberties, estates, gospel, or whatever else is neer or dear to us. 3. This is the way to be saved, with all manner and kinds of salvation, and from all sorts and kinds of evils, whether temporal, spiritual, or eternal. As

1. from our sins, from their guilt, to have them pardoned and forgiven. *If my people, says the Lord, shall humble themselves, and pray; and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I pardon their sins, &c. and repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, &c.* 2. From our sufferings, miseries, and calamities, the mischievous fruits and effects of sin. Thus the Lord promises, upon his peoples turning to him, not onely to pardon their sins;

2 Chron. 7. 14.

Acts 3. 19.

but also to heal their land, that is, remove those

2 Chron. 7. 14.

Acts 11. 18.
2 Cor. 7. 10.

judgments, which were as the sores and wounds of it. So *Hos. 6. 1. Come, say they, and let us return unto the Lord, and what then? why then, be that hath torn, will heal us; and he that hath smitten us, will bind us up: and v. 2. After two dayes will he revive us, &c.* 3. As from these here, so from hell, and wrath, and eternal death hereafter. And hence repentance is said to be *repentance unto life, and repentance unto salvation, and repent and turn your selves* (says God) *from your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruine.* Thus God's turning us again, and causing his face to shine, it remedies all peoples evils and miseries here, and brings to them full salvation hereafter.

6. This is the onely way for a people to be saved indeed, to be sav'd to purpose, and in mercy, as you have heard, so as in being saved to be blessed, and happy, and to have it well with them. Thus, this it is the onely way for a people to be saved, and no other way will do, or will or can prove soveraign, or effectual, either for a people or a person, either for our selves or the nation; no, whatever other ways we take, or other attempts or experiments we make, without this, they will all prove but abortive, and to no purpose, nor avail any thing, but we shall perish notwithstanding. And this I propose as the onely way, in opposition to all worldly carnal ways, and means, and shifts, and devices, that men make use of, and betake themselves to, to save and secure themselves by, with neglect of this; but in vain and to no purpose do they do it: and yet this is that to which men are very

prone, to run to other means and helps, with neglect of this; as the Scripture declares, and the Lord complains: *when Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb, yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. Ephraim also is like a silly Dove without heart,* that is, simple, foolish, without judgment and understanding; why? it follows, *they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria,* to aid and relieve them, and neglect the onely way of their help, which was to return to the Lord their God, and seek him. This spake them foolishli and silly indeed, for what says God? *When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them, I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven,* that is, I will blast their projects and designs, and make the issue of them to be their own ruine and confusion. They thought to mount and soar on high, but I will make them come down with a witness; and hence says God, *Wo unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, for they have transgressed against me,* that is, gone on to rebell against me still, in stead of turning unto me. And what could betide such, but ruine and destruction? So in *Isaiah 22.* how sedulous and exact are the Jews there in their carnal policies, and worldly contrivances, to secure themselves? but with a neglect of God, and the true way of their safety, which was their return to him: *And he discovered the covering of Judah.* Some by this Covering understand the city it self, whither the people repair'd for shelter; others,

Is. 22. 8, 9, 10, 11.

the Temple, or Sanctuary, and the vain confidence they put therein; others, their strong holds, armories, or storehouses, where their armes and ammunition were bestowed, or what ever else it was, wherein their power, preparations, or provisions, for the safeguarding themselves and their city did consist, as it follows, *and thou didst look in that day to the Armour of the house of the Forrest*, that is, as is conceived, the Magazine of the Kingdom; *ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls, for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect to him that fashioned it long ago.* Thus as to worldly carnal means and helps, they are very sedulous and exact, very precise in every punctilio, they neither spare for pains nor cost; but they neglecting the main, which was to repent, and turn to God, and which God then in a more special manner did call for, *v. 12.* all the other availed them nothing, neither did they or could they save or secure them. And hence the Lord expostulates the case with them, as concerning their folly and vanity therein: *Jer. 2. 36. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?* running for help sometimes to one party one way, and sometimes another way: or *to change thy way*, that is, the way I have prescribed thee, and should be thy way,

way; as if the Lord had said, thou knowest well enough the way of thy weal, thy way to be saved, and why then doest thou gad up and down to find out new ways, and to try other ways? why, they shall avail thee nothing, *thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria*: as if the Lord had said, they shall all serve thee alike, as thou hast been deceived and been befooled by the one, so shalt thou also be by the other; yea v. 37. *Thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head, (i.e. with sorrow, shame, and disgrace, whereof this was a sign, as it is said of Tamar, when ravished by her Brother Amnon, that she laid her hand on her head, and went on crying,) for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences,* that is all thy vain refuges and ways, which thou seekest and betakest thy self to, out of God's way, *the Lord hath rejected them,* or as some, despised them, scorn'd them, and as it were derided them, and thy folly in imagining to save and secure thy self by them. *And thou shalt not prosper in them,* for Ezek. 24. 12. they are but lies, as the Lord tels *Jerusalem* elsewhere, *she hath wearied her self with lies,* that is, with other ways and means then of my appointing; instead of repenting and turning to me, the onely true way of her weal, and means of her cure, and which I have so often call'd for, and invited her to, with much patience and forbearance, by my Prophets, she hath betaken her self to other ways and means, run to carnal helps, and all manner of worldly shifts and devices; and here she hath been very industrious

strious, taken a great deal of pains, so as even to weary her self, running up and down, one while this way, and another while another way, and all to underprop her ruinous condition, and to keep off the threatned destruction, but in vain, for they are all but lies and vanities, and so she shall experience them. And why? it follows, *because her scum went not out of her*, that is, her sin and wickedness, so call'd for its vileness and filthiness, she still retain'd that, and therefore *she and her scum shall be in the fire*, that is, she neglecting the onely true way of her weal, and means of her deliverance, which was true repentance and conversion, all her other worldly and carnal ways and meanes, which she had with so much care and toil sought out, shall all prove false and unfaithful to her, and deceive her. And hence does the Lord so earnestly and pathetically, as being very desirous and sollicitous of *Jerusalem's* weal, invite her to the right way thereof, and to avert that heavy destruction threatned against her, and coming upon her. O *Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou may'st be saved*, that is, repent and turn from thy wickedness, reform thy heart and life. There is indeed the washing of justification from the guilt of sin, by the blood of Christ; and of sanctification from the filth of sin, by the Spirit of Christ: but by this washing here, we are to understand that of true, serious and sound repentance, and conversion, and reformation of heart and life from wickedness, when the heart is turn'd from it, and engag'd against it. And of
this

Jer. 4. 14.

Officii nostri
est, pœnitenti-
am agere ut
servemur, qui
quidem pœni-
tentiz fructus
est. Pise.

this washing we read elsewhere, and it is cal- Isaiah 1. 16.
 led, *v. 1. returning to the Lord, and putting a-* James 4. 8.
way their abominations out of Gods sight; v. 3. Jer. 4. 1.
breaking up their fallow-ground; v. 4. circum-
cising themselves to the Lord, and taking away
the foreskins of their hearts; and it is the same
with that, in Acts 8. 22. Repent therefore of
this thy wickedness, &c. And this the Lord here
invites Jerusalem to, as her onely way of being
saved: O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from
wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. As if the
Lord had said, thou cryest indeed, wo unto us, for
we are spoiled, v. 13. but yet there is a way of
thy being saved, and it is the onely way, and
therefore if yet at last thou hast any mind to be
saved, and to have it well with thee, as I have,
and to prevent that utter ruine that is coming
upon thee, betake thy self to it, wash thine heart
from wickedness, how long shall thy vain thoughts
lodg within thee? Thus the Lord calls all their
thoughts and hopes of safety elsewhere, and from
other means, as forraign forces, and the like,
vain; such, as however they fed themselves with
them, should never effect their weal, nor be able
to relieve them, but in relying on them, they
relyed but upon vanity and falshood. And hence
it is, that the Church and people of God here
are so intent upon this, and so earnest for this,
they importune it no less than three times, as if
they would have no denial, because they knew
full well as this was the right way, and a sure
way, for their weal; so it was the onely way,
and there was no other, and God must do this,

or they could not be saved, neither could it be well with them, whatever else they betook themselves to.

CHAP. VII.

NOW in the further prosecution of this point, of so great importance, and infinite concern, as to our own and the Nations weal, I shall do these three things in general.

1. I shall shew you what kind, and what manner of *turn* that is, and must be, that is thus effectual as to a peoples being saved: for it is not every turn that does, or can effect this.

2. I shall give you the reasons of the point.

3. I shall apply it, and endeavour several ways to improve it.

As concerning the first, truly there are so many excellent Treatises already extant, and that both formerly, and of late, and that by more able pens, that it might seem needless to add more; and indeed for substance what more almost can be written, that is not written already? Yet because variety of gifts may please, and I hope, profit, as to the promoting of so blessed a work, wherein not onely our own, but the whole Nations weal is so infinitely concern'd; and that I may not seem to build without a foundation, somewhat I shall say, but be the briefer, at least as to some things; and as concerning this *Turn*, you must know in general, that there are several sorts of Turns or Changes,

Changes. As 1. in substance, which is called generation. 2. In place, called local mutation. 3. In quality, called alteration, when things are turn'd and chang'd from one quality, and one manner and fashion to another; when the present property, frame, and disposition of a thing is quite turn'd and alter'd from what it was before; and of this latter, we are to understand this *turn*, or mutation here. For 1. there is no turn or change in substance, the person sinning and turning being still the same in substance, body and soul the same, and all the parts, powers, and faculties of both, the same: thus, in this sense, *Manasseh*, *Mary Magdalene*, *Paul*, &c. were the same before and after their conversion. Nor 2. in place; for the sinner is, or may be still in the same place where he was before, or if he do change his place, it does not avail any thing here; for sin (as one well observes) like a man's sickness, is carried with him where ever he goes, and change of place, no more than change of beds, does free him, or make him whole. No, it is not change of place, but an effectual work of grace that turns the heart. *Cain* was the same in the land of *Nod*, as he was where he dwelt before; and the *Israelites*, which came evil out of *Egypt*, remained the same in the wilderness. Thus *Moses* tells them, *They provoked the Lord their God to wrath in the wilderness, yea from the day that they did depart out of the land of Egypt, untill they came to that place they had been rebellious against the Lord. Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath:*

In resipiscen-
tia, homines
adeo immutan-
tur, ut quales
antea fuerant,
tales esse desi-
nant, non ta-
men in mole
& substantia
corporis, sed in
animi inclina-
tionibus, & ap-
petitionibus,
&c. *Deut. de
resipisc.*

*Deut. 9.7, 8,
22, 23, 24.*

and

and at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth Hattavah: And when the Lord sent them from Kadesh-Barnea, saying, go up and possess the land which I have given you, then they rebelled, yea (says Moses) you have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. In the 33. of *Numb.* Moses there reckons up no less than two and fourty journeys that they made, as from Rameses to Succoth, from Succoth to Etham, from Etham to Pihahiroth, &c. and yet all these changes of place made no change as to their manners, and dispositions, but still they carried their sins along with them: and the holy Ghost calls the whole time of their journeying in the wilderness, where they removed and changed place so often, *the provocation, Harden not your hearts as in the provocation*, that is, in the time when ye sinned, and walked frowardly, offending me, and provoking me against you, breaking my laws, vexing and grieving my Spirit, and *fourty years long was I grieved with this generation*, &c. How often in that time did they change their places, and yet still the same? yea, it is said *Psalms 106. 7. They provoked him at the Sea, even at the red Sea*, there they sinned against him, yea *in the red Sea*, not onely whiles they were on the bank, but even while they were passing through, the Lord by a wonderful miracle, having made it to them as dry land to walk upon; and one would have thought such a place might have made some change in them, but it did not, there they still continue their murmurings and their mutinings; and thus

Quidam ex
Hebræo, ver-
tunt juxta ma-
re, in mari ru-
bro, ut sen'us
sit, illos non so-
lūm in littore,
sed etiam dum
ipsum mare pe-
dibus transmit-
terent, de Deo
conquestos esse,
&c. Flaminius
in locum.

Vix dum egres-
si ex Egypto, in
ipso maris
transitu contra
suum redemp-
torem proterve
insurrexerint.
Calvin. in lo-
cum.

thus some read it, *they provoked him in the Sea*, even when they saw that glorious work, and there lies the *Emphasis*, that they provoked him even in that Sea which God carried them through. There was a turn and change indeed in the Sea that goes back, and becomes dry land, and in the waters they are divided, and are a wall on the right hand and on the left, but none in them. And thus *the figs which were so very evil in Jerusalem, continued evil still in Babylon*. And how many in this great and populous city, who (upon occasion of the late dreadful, and never to be forgotten Fire) changed their places, still retained their sins, and the change of their places, have made no change of their conditions, but still retain their old frames and dispositions, their old pride and luxury, and vanity, &c. and though many have of late changed again their places, are they not still the same, and though they have new houses, chang'd them, have they not still their old hearts? and therefore this turn, and change here, is not of places but of quality, when one and the same man, is quite turned from what he was before: I mean in the present frame, state, and disposition of the whole man, both body and soul, and all the parts, powers, and faculties, both of the one and the other, as from sin to holiness, from iniquity to righteousness, from Satan to God, from hell to heaven, and that I say in the whole man, and whole conversation. Thus *old things are past away, and all are in quality and disposition become new*. There are new hearts and new spirits,

Jerem. 24.

Quantum homo à suis consuetis vitiis recesserit, tantum in resipiscentiæ usu & exercitio processit, sed qui idem est manetq; qualis fuit, sane nunquam resipuit, ideoque est damnationi proximus.

&c.

&c. as the Lord promises, not as to their essence, or substance, or powers, or faculties, but gracious new qualities and inclinations. The instrument is still the same, and so are the strings, but the tune is chang'd and mended; the waters are the same, but they are healed: so that in some sense the man is now quite alter'd, and turn'd, from what he was before, and he is not the same, but there is a strange spiritual *metamorphosis* in, and upon him, and he has another spirit, as is said of *Caleb*, *but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit*, that is, an excellent spirit: and 2 Cor. 3. 18. --- *we are chang'd into the same image from glory to glory, &c.*

Thus in general, but now more particularly and distinctly. This turn,

*Peccatoris
conversio est
opus quod cre-
atæ naturæ vi-
res excedit.*

Jer. 31. 18.

1. *It must be such as is of God*, as the Lord God of Hosts himself works, and is the author of; as is his gift, and wrought by his Spirit, and not meerly of man, or from our selves, which is yet all the turn of many, and cannot therefore be right, it being neither wholly to God, nor from God; *Turn thou me*, says *Ephraim*, and *I shall be turned*, then we are turned indeed, and not till then.

2. *Such as is join'd with kindly contrition and humiliation*, and this occasioned, by a thorow and sound conviction of sin, which the Holy Ghost is the Author and efficient of, *Joh. 16. 8.* and this contrition and humiliation is as it were, the foundation, and conversion the superstructure, and both together contrition and conversion, humiliation and reformation, are the two
main

main essential parts of repentance ; a kindly brokenness of heart for sin, and a breaking off from sin, when we grieve, and are deeply humbled for it, and depart from it, are sorry for it and forsake it : and hence we read of repentance of sin, or for sin, and repentance from sin, and the former of these is called in Scripture godly sorrow, 2 Cor. 7. 10. *For Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of*, that is, we feeling indeed the bitterness of our sins, and being truly touched in conscience for them, that we have offended so great and holy a God, and so gracious and loving a father, we come by the help of God's Spirit, to alter and change the purpose and resolution of our hearts, before set on sin, and turn them to the Lord, and now avoid, forsake, and abandon sin, and this is called *godly sorrow*, or, as it is in the Original, sorrow according to God ; that is, 1. which proceeds and comes from God, which the Spirit of God is the Author of, *Zach. 12. 10. Ps. 147. 18. --he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow*: so true penitential tears are they which flow, upon the breathing of God's Spirit. 2. Which is mainly, chiefly, and principally for God, I mean for the offence done to him, that so great and so good a God, and merciful a father should be provoked to wrath by our sin : it is not so much the bitterness for sin, but the bitterness in sin, as it refers to God himself, that troubles here. *Pf. 51. 4. Luke. 15. 18. Ezek. 6. 9.* 3. Which brings the sinner to God : as *Hof. 6. 1. Luke 15. 18.* and that which encourages

2 Cor. 7. 10.
Qui secundum
Deum tristis
est, eo dolore
qui à Dei Spi-
ritu manat, de
peccatis suis
dolet, idq; non
pœnæ formi-
dine territus,
sed hoc ipsum
ægerime fe-
rens, quod De-
um clementis-
simum patrem
offenderit, &c.
Beza.

2 Cor. 7. 11.

to this, is the hope of pardon through the merits of Christ, which also is accompanied with a firm purpose of avoiding sin for the future, and this is sorrow *according to God*, according to his own mind and heart, that is, acceptable to God, and well pleasing to him, and the Holy Ghost in the very next verse sets down seven several fruits or signs of this godly sorrow, seven several effects which manifest themselves in the practise and exercise thereof, which because they are of so great concern, I shall give a brief hint of: *For behold this self same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, 1. what carefulness it wrought in you*; that is, to obtain pardon and reconciliation, and to leave and abandon all sin, especially that lately fallen into, and in all things for the future to please God, and to perform conscionably all holy duties required of him, &c. *2. what clearing of your selves*, that is, not by defending or excusing your sins, or your selves for your sins, but rather by confessing and acknowledging of them, and judging and condemning your selves for them, and so by earnest seeking unto God, and pleading Christs satisfaction, getting your Consciences cleared of the guilt and defilement of them; *yea, 3. what indignation*, that is, against your sins, and your selves for your sins, being exceedingly angry with your selves for your offences; oh! that you should be so foolish and sottish, that such madness should possess you, to provoke so great a God, and to offend so good a God, and so gracious and merciful a Father, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish*

Deut. 32. 6.

people and unwise? Is not he thy Father, &c. Micah 6. 3.
 O my people what have I done unto thee, &c. O Psalm 73. 22.
 that for what is so momentany, worthless, yea
 many times vile, I should forfeit that which
 is of such worth, as to break my peace, im-
 pair my joy, estrange my God, and his favour,
 wherein is life, yea which is better than life,
 &c. yea 4. what fear, that is, lest ye should
 relapse and fall into former sins again, or into
 other; which fear ariseth from the sense of our
 own weakness, and experience of the strength
 of corruption, and Satans temptations, as
 also of our own woe and misery formerly
 sustein'd, &c. yea 5. what vehement desire, that
 is, to be freed more and more from sin, and for
 strength and assistance against sin for the fu-
 ture, for farther supplies of the Spirit, greater
 degrees of holiness, full^{er} enjoyments of God,
 and more and more of his P^resence, &c. yea 6.
 what zeal in the performing of all good duties,
 and these more especially that are contrary to
 your special sins, so to honour God, to love
 him, fear him, serve him, obey him, enjoy him,
 to do all the good ye can to others, overlooking
 difficulties, and breaking through all discour-
 agements, zeal being as it were the transpor-
 tation of the soul, and an extream heat or high
 strein and measure of all the affections, for
 and towards God, and against whatever is con-
 trary, &c. yea 7. what revenge, that is, of your
 selves for your former offences, in labouring
 to mortifie the corruption of your natures, and
 subdue sin, especially that you have most
 de-

Conspicuum ne-
 speciale resipi-
 scientiæ indici-
 um est, nosmet
 ipsæ in his re-
 bus in quibus
 maxime pecca-
 vimus corrige-
 re & emendare.

delighted in, and been addicted to, as also in subduing the body, that it may not be an instrument of sin, and in restraining your selves even in things lawful, &c. thus all is set a work in manifesting the fruits of this godly sorrow: And then our turning to God again, our conversion is right, when it is founded in humiliation, and kindly remorse; and thus the Scripture sets it forth, *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and turn from their wicked ways, &c. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself: and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, &c. --- If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, &c. and so in many other places. Ahab humbling himself, but not reforming, and Herod seemingly reforming, but not humbling himself, neither of their turning proved right.*

2 Chro. 7. 14.

Jer. 31. 18. 19.

Levit. 26. 41.

Sine fide in
Christum nul-
la vera resipi-
scientia esse po-
test. Zanch. in
Hof. 14. 1.

Vera conversio
fit ad Jehovam,
præeunte ejus
bonitatis cog-
nitione.

1 Kings 20 31.

3. It must be such a turning, as arises from, and is grounded upon some measure at least of faith. Some apprehensions and persuasions of mercy, and remission in and through Christ. For whiles a sinner apprehends in God nothing but rigour, and severity, how should he relent towards him, or come in and submit to him? What was it made Benhadad humbly to apply himself to the King of Israel? it was his having heard that *the Kings of Israel were merciful Kings, and let us therefore* (say his servants) *put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the King of Israel, peradventure he will save thy life.* So who can tell, (said the

King

King of Niniveh, if God will turn, and repent, Jonah 3. 9.
and turn from his fierce anger, that we perish not? Nemo ad Deum redire vel
 Thus true faith, at least in some measure, must audet, vel potest, nisi spe
 go before repentance, I mean sound Evangelical veniz conceptâ. Spes remis-
 repentance, and such as is acceptable to God, sionis, incenti-
 and that as the root thereof: for when a sinner vum pœnitentiz. Ambros.
 comes to apprehend and believe mercy, and remission of sin, then does he repent indeed, then does he sorrow and mourn for sin, and turn unto God from what is displeasing unto him. In time indeed faith and repentance may be said to be both together, but in order of nature faith is first. And hence we find in Scripture, that the exhortations to repent, and turn to God, are commonly grounded upon the goodness and mercy of God, which the sinner must apprehend, and be in some measure perswaded of, if ever he kindly repent and turn to him. *Return thou back-sliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful saith the Lord, and return and I will heal your back-slidings.* So — *Turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and who knoweth if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, &c.* And, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, &c.* And so in many places besides; and also in the New Testament, the promise of grace, and pardon, and salvation, is propounded as the great

Jer. 3. 12, 13.

Joel 2. 13, 14.

Isaiah 55. 7, 8.

Nemo se curandum præbeat, qui contemptui, non compassioni, se medico suo putat futurum.

Matth. 3. 2.
—4. 17.

Acts 3. 19.

motive, and means, and cause of Repentance, i.e. as apprehended and received; and how can that be but by faith? *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand: and Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, &c.* And hence true repentance may be thus described, that it is *An Evangelical or Gospel-saving grace, whereby a believing sinner, or a sinner upon the apprehension and perswasion of the mercy of God in Christ, to such as are penitent, so grieves and humbles himself for his sins, as that he turns from them to the Lord: for where there are nothing but apprehensions of wrath and displeasure, there can be no true saving Evangelical conversion.*

Jer. 31. 19.

4. It must be such a turning, *as hath joyn'd with it shame, and even confusion of face, for what the sinner turns from, for what he hath been, and done, for the sins he hath committed.* And thus it was with Ephraim, when he repented and turn'd to God indeed, as himself acknowledges. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented, that is, God working in me by a spirit of conversion, I also cooperated by and with his grace, having a lively sorrow for my sin, and a striving after newness of life, and now my heart was in another frame, and my life in another way then before. And after I was instructed, saw and understood, and consider'd, how it was with me, what I had been, and what I had done, I smote upon my thigh, I was much mov'd, troubled, and griev'd, and not onely so, but I was ashamed, yea confounded.* Thus it was, when he was turn'd, and

and repented indeed, because (says he) *I did bear the reproach of my youth*, of those sins and excesses, and miscarriages of my youth: these much dear'd me, and exceedingly sham'd me, as they will do others, when they come to repent indeed. O that sin and Satan, and the world and vanity, should have the prime and flower of their age, and the best and first of their days, and that in their very strength and vigour, when they were best able to do him service, they should do him least, nay be unserviceable and serve the Devil, and their lusts! And what a shameful thing is this, and how can the sinner but blush, when he comes to be sensible of it? Shame and confusion of face is that which arises from doing shameful things, from doing what is unworthy, unseemly, vile, even against common principles; so from doing that of which comes no fruit or benefit, but hurt rather, as also from having hopes frustrated, &c. and all these fall in with sin. What a vile and unworthy thing is it, that *God should be left for the creature, the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns that can hold no water? that happiness in self should be forsaken for misery, all-sufficiency for indigency and vanity, and the Lord of life and glory for vile lusts and leasing, &c.* There is a natural affection of shame which appears in the countenance by blushing, when any thing is done amiss, and is to be cherisht especially in young ones, so as to be as a bridle to keep off from what is matter of shame, so it grow not to excess; but then there is a holy and gracious

Pudor est affectus qui nascitur ob aliquam turpitudinem, &c. P. Martyr.

Ezra 9. 6.

Ezek. 16. 61.

—36. 31.

Sancti viui
semper dolent
& erubescunt
de admissis
peccatis. Pet.
Martyr.
Rom. 6. 21.

Jerem. 3. 3.

—6. 15.

shame, which is a concomitant of Repentance, and conversion, causing trouble and grief, and debasing of the soul before God, and this hath been still found among true Converts. Thus *Ezra, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God, &c.* So the Lord tells *Jerusalem, Then shalt thou remember thy wayes, and be ashamed, &c.* And ye shall loath your selves in your own sight for your iniquities, &c. And this hath such an affinity with repentance, that it is sometimes put for Repentance. *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, that is, whereof ye now repent, and from which ye are converted, for the end of those things is death:* and therefore well might they be ashamed of such things, in which not onely there was no profit, but which tended to so much hurt, even to their own ruine and destruction. And thus it is with all true converts, however before they bore themselves up, and set a good face on their sins; yet now being enlightened, and come to themselves, and their right minds, they are *ashamed*. And if this be to repent, and be converted, how few Converts are there in these days, and how far are such from it, who go on in their sins without shame, which is an heavy aggravation of them? It is best not to do what is matter of shame, but having done it, not to be ashamed, doubles it; and it is that the Lord much complains of. *Thou had'st a whores forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.* And, *were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? nay they were not at all ashamed, neither*

ther could they blush; they would not blush, and at length they were so hardened, *they could not blush*. This the Lord complains of again, Jer. 8. 12. and again in *Isaiah* 3. 9. *The shew of their countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin, as Sodom, they hide it not*: they are bold, brazen-fac'd, impudent, they care not who sees or knows their sin, they glory even in their shame. And this is too too much the guise of *England* at this day, which does so much aggravate our sin, and augment our guilt, and is exceeding sad, and bodes exceeding ill. Our filthiness, as was said of *Jerusalem*, is in our skirts, it is not hid, but open, obvious, apparent; and *I have not found it* (says the Lord) *by secret search, or by digging*, no it is so manifest, that there's no need of that. The Apostle tells us, that in his days, they that were drunken, were drunken in the night: sin, it seems, was more modest then, but now they can reel up and down by day. Now I will not say, that these that are thus past shame, are past grace, for grace may and hath wrought upon the shameleffest sinners, as upon *Manasseh*, and *Mary Magdalene*; but this I will say, that at present they are void of grace, and very far from conversion: an impudent sinner is ever an hardened and impenitent sinner, and such as are not and will not be ashamed of sin. penitentially here, shall be ashamed and confounded everlastingly hereafter.

5. It must be such a turning from sin, as is with confession of sin. As we see in *David*, *I ac-*

*Ilum ego pe-
riisse dico, cui
periit pudor.
Salust.*

Lament. 1. 9.

Jerem. 2. 34.

1 Thes. 5. 7.

- Pſalm. 32. 5. *knowledged my ſin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid, I ſaid I will confeſs my trangreſſions unto the Lord, &c.* And it is not every confeſſion neither, for *Saul* confeſt his ſin, but was proud, *honour me yet before the people*; and *Judas*, but deſpair'd. It muſt therefore be *humble, free, full, fiducial, and with a forſaking of it*; and this is ſo coincident to repentance, that it is ſometimes put for it, and ſo neceſſary, that without it there is no remiſſion nor finding mercy. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive our ſins, &c. but if we will not confeſs them, he will not forgive them. He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy, &c.* But this I do but mention.
- Voluntaria
confeſſio cum
fide conjuncta
elt. *Calvin.*
- 1 Sam. 15. 30. *was proud, honour me yet before the people*; and *Judas*, but deſpair'd. It muſt therefore be *humble, free, full, fiducial, and with a forſaking of it*; and this is ſo coincident to repentance, that it is ſometimes put for it, and ſo neceſſary, that without it there is no remiſſion nor finding mercy. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive our ſins, &c. but if we will not confeſs them, he will not forgive them. He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy, &c.* But this I do but mention.
- 1 John 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive our ſins, &c. but if we will not confeſs them, he will not forgive them. He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy, &c.* But this I do but mention.
- Prov. 28. 13. *He that covereth his ſins, ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy, &c.* But this I do but mention.

Pſal. 14. 3.
Prov. 13. 5.
Ezek. 6. 9. &c.

6. It muſt be ſuch a turning from ſin, as is *with hatred and deteſtation of it, and an averſation from it*; which ariſes from a ſight and ſenſe not onely of the danger, but of the filthineſs and odiousneſs of ſin, of the loathſomneſs thereof, as it defiles and makes abominable. *They are altogether become filthy, and a wicked man is loathſome, &c. and they ſhall loath themſelves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.* It reſpects ſin, not onely as it burns, but as it blacks, and is contrary to the holy nature, and holy and righteous law of God. And this is an infallible character of true converſion, when there is not onely ſome kind of leaving of ſin, but a loathing of ſin, and of our ſelves by reaſon of ſin; when our hands do not onely ſhut themſelves of it, but our hearts riſe up againſt it:

as is said of *Job*, that he *eschewed evil*; he did not onely not commit it, but with reluctancy and abhorrency turn'd from it, and with regret shunn'd it, and declin'd it, as a man would do his enemy, or a Serpent in his way. or poyson in his food; so much the Hebrew word imports, a reluctancy of his spirit. Thus *David*, *hated the work of them that turn'd aside, and vain thoughts, yea every false way.* And this hath still been the frame of true converts, and the very life, strength, and Spirituality of holiness lies here. A godly man may do evil, but yet he *hates evil*; but *what I hate*, says *Paul*, that do

I. There is a great deal of difference between not doing sometimes evil, and hating evil, as between doing and loving what is good, and this latter speaks most what a man is. It is made the character of a wicked man: *he sets himself in a way that is not good, he abhors not evil.* He hates not the evil he does not, nor loves the good he does; whereas a godly man hates the evil he does, and loves the good he does not. And this hatred, if it be right, is universal, against all evil, as *David* *hated every false way*, hatred and enmity being against the whole kind, as a man hates the whole kind of Serpents and Toads, and so the Lamb of Wolves. 2. The neerer it is, the more we abhor it, it affecting more, as in our selves, and ours. 3. It is irreconcilable, so as never to make any new league with sin. Yea 4. it seeks the utter ruine and destruction of it. But if this be the character of true converts, and that which accompanies saving conversion, how few

Job 1. 1.
ויד נעצר,
declinavit, a-
vertit se.

Psal 101. 3.
—119. 113.
—128.

Rom. 7. 15.

Psal 36. 4.

Rom. 1. 30.
Amos 5. 10.
Titus 3. 3. &c.

Prov. 2. 14.
Isa. 66. 3.
Job 20. 12, 13,
24.

Hos. 14. 8.
Hoc ex animo
dicere, testi-
monium est
veræ resipiscen-
tiæ. Zanch. in
locum.

Isa. 30. 22.

few have we, and how rare is it? we have many indeed that are *haters of God*, and of *those*, and of *that which is good*, as the Scripture expresses it, that hate *God's Prophets*, and him that *rebukes in the gate*, and *speaks uprightly*, that *hate one another*, and that *hate the light*, and *knowledge*, and *reproof*, and *instruction*, yea their *own souls*, but few that hate *sin*, that *abhor* that which is *evil*: no, they rather *love* it and *like* it, and *delight* and *rejoyce* in it. *They have chosen their own ways*, and their *soul delighteth in their abominations*. *Wickedness is sweet in their mouths*, they *hide it under their tongues*, they *spare it*, and *for sake it not*, &c. But this which they so *spare*, and is as their *meat*, will not *spare* them, but be *turn'd in their bowels*, which they would not *turn from*, and be as the *gall of Asps within them*, &c. But if ever God turn us again indeed, it will be otherwise with us, it will be with us as it was with *Ephraim*, we shall say as he said, and do as he did, as in reference to our sins. *Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with Idols?* Thus he shall say heartily, and with utmost indignation and aversation, with greatest heat of anger, and height of hatred, *What have I any more to do with you? I have had too much to do with you already.* Thus *Ephraim* upon his conversion should abominate those *Idols* his heart had formerly been *glewed* to, and he should cast them away with detestation, yea, as it is said elsewhere, *as a menstruous cloth*, and say unto them, *get ye hence.* And O that God would bring *England* to this, that it might

might be said of us, as in reference to our sins, what is said of *Amnon*, in reference to his sister *Tamar*, that *the hatred wherewith we now hate sin*, and hate our evil ways, *is greater than the love wherewith we lov'd them*. O how would God then *hear us and observe us*, as he did *Ephraim*, he would have a gracious eye upon us, and manifest his special favour toward us.

² Sam. 13. 15.

Hof. 14. 8.

7. It must be *such a turning from sin, as is* *Vera conversio*
even unto the Lord, not onely towards him, or *est ad Deum*
 half way to him, but quite unto him; nor to *reditio. Parens.*
 something else beside him, or below him, but
 to himself. The Lord complains of *Ephraim*,
They return, but not to the most high: he called
 upon them to return, and they were ready to
 say, so they did, but *not to the most high*, but
 turn'd and rackt about to something else besides
 him, or below him; it may be from one sin to
 another, or from more gross and open sins to
 more secret, or it may be from prophaneness to
 some outward shews and semblances of piety, or
 formal duties and performances, and outward
 exercises of repentance, as some were much in
 fastings, and outward humiliations, and exer-
 cises of religion; or they return'd to their for-
 mer sins again, but not to the *most high*; he
 himself was not the end nor center of their mo-
 tion, but though they seem'd to make towards
 him, yet came they short of him. *Jehu*, he seem'd
 to reform indeed, and to reduce the people to
 the true worship of God, in taking away *Baal*,
 but he still retained the Calves. *They are like*
(says the Lord) a deceitful bow, which seems to
 direct

Fingunt se vel-
le redire & vo-
lare ad Deum,
sed mox ani-
mus ipforum,
retro agitur;
& per flexuo-
sas ambages
vagantur, &
nunquam ad
Deum acce-
dunt.

Arcus obliquus
est cor, &c.
Zanch.



Usque ad me.

Jer. 4. 1.

direct the arrow to such a mark, but through its obliquity turns it aside another way. So they promised and made shews of amendment, and of *returning to God* as their onely scope, but through the crookedness and deceitfulness of their hearts they were carried aside to something else. Here, as a Learned Interpreter observes, the deceitful Bow is the Heart, the Arrows the thoughts, and seeming desires of repentance. And this is all the change and turn of many; they seem *to return*, but not to *the most high*, but take up in something else, as in being meerly moral, or civil, or in some outward forms and superstitious ways of worship, or it may be they are not now prophane: but what are they? meer Scepticks in Religion and wholly taken up in disputations about the same; they run roving here and there, sometimes of this opinion, and sometimes of that, but never fix on God, nor Religion indeed. And truly this is too too much the guise of the turns of these times, but that turn which the Lord calls for, is, even unto him, *Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me*, and not to other things besides me, or below me, or a this-side me, but altogether as far, and quite through unto me. So the Lord again bespeaks *Israel, If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me, &c.* as if the Lord had said, Thou makest shews, and dost pretend, as if thou wouldest return, thou makest offers of returning; but if thou art minded and resolved to return indeed, and to purpose, let it be *unto me*, do this, or it is nothing all thou doest, and

and this is the right turning indeed, when we give God the whole turn, and not the half onely, so as to be half-converts, or almost Christians, but altogether so as to go through with the work, and not to set onely a little upon repenting and turning, and then to give over; as many who came out of *Egypt*, but never quite came into *Canaan*.

8. It much be such a turning, as is *with all the heart, and so true and sincere*. *Joel 2. 12. Turn ye even to me with all your heart*, with the heart, and with all the heart, in opposition to a divided heart, and a double heart, a heart and an heart, there must be here no halting, nor halving with God, he will have all or none: as *Samuel* told *Israel*, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, &c. And for the want of this the Lord taxes *Judah*, *And yet for all this, her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord*, that is, deceitfully, hypocritically, and therefore feignedly, because not with her whole heart. So we read *Psalms 78. 34. of the Israelites, that when he slew them, then they sought him and they returned*; but it was all but flattering of him, and lying to him: why? because *their heart was not right with him*, as *Peter* told *Simon*, *Thy heart is not right in the sight of God*, and this turning can never be right and sincere, where the heart is not right. *My son* (says God) *give me thy heart*, the heart in conversion must be given up to God, and then *our eyes observe his ways*. *It is a people that do erre in their hearts,*
their

1 Sam. 7. 3.

Jer. 3. 10.

v. 37.

Acts 8. 21.

Pro. 23. 26.

Psalms 95. 10.

their hearts were still straying and wandering ; it may be they pretended fair with their lips, but God had not their hearts, and therefore he *sware in his wrath they should not enter into his rest.*

9. *It must be universal, total :* 1 as to the Subject turning or turn'd ; all must be turn'd, the whole man. *Old things must passe away, and all things become new. 1 1 bes. 5. 23. And the very God of peace sanctifie you wholly, &c.* Look as the whole man, every part and faculty of body and soul is by nature, and much more by sinful practice, averse to God, and turn'd away from God ; so all in conversion must be turn'd again to God, both in body and soul, every part of one, and faculty of the other, mind, will, affections ; and else it is but partial conversion, half-conversion, and so not true nor sincere, because not universal. In true conversion there is not onely a conversion of the mind from error, and heresy, to assent to the true faith and doctrine of Christ ; but also of the will, heart, and affections, to submit to, and willingly obey the holy laws and commands of Christ. That's no true conversion ; when men assent to the truth, and yet love the world, and their lusts still, and are ungodly in their lives ; but in true conversion there is a turning here also, and this is the main and chief, and all in all, and this is hard and rare ; but the other, which is partial, is frequent, and often in Scripture condemned. *Ezek. 33. 31. With their mouth (says God) they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness :*

ness : and *Math. 15. 8.* *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me,* that's not turned, but in true conversion all is turned. Hence *James 1. 26.* *If any man among you (says the Apostle) seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* For if he was truly religious, Religion would manifest it self in and from his tongue also, though not onely, as well as be in his heart ; that also would be turned from the evils thereof, as railing, reviling, foolish and idle and much speaking, censuring, which many that seem to be religious are very free in, and make no great matter of : but however such may seem to others, or themselves to be religious, by the practise of some outward duties, and by attending on God's worship, &c. They do but deceive their own souls, and pretend Religion to no purpose, for where conversion is true, it is so operative and effectual, as that it turns all, mind, will, heart, affections, eyes, ears, hands, feet, lips, life : the mind that is turned, from its vanity, ignorance, and blindness, vain thoughts, and unbelieving imaginations ; the will from its obstinacy, rebellion, and disobedience ; the heart from its hardness, and both it and the affections from those unlawful objects they were placed upon, and that excess and violence, and immoderacy, that they formerly ran out into ; and so the members of the body from the evils of them, as from being any longer instruments and tools for the execution of sin. *Ro. 6. 13. &c.* 2. *As*

Vera peniten-
tia, est & ani-
mi, & morum,
ab omni impi-
etate, ad pie-
tatem mutatio.

Mat. 5. 29, 30.

119 Psal. 128.

113.

— 18. 23.

— 101. 3.

2. *As to the object turn'd from, viz.* every sin, all evill, the least as well as the greatest, yea and the most beloved, at least as to approving of it, or lying or living any longer in it, and as to the dominion of it. Thus all must be turn'd from, as none in confession are to be dissembled, so none in conversion are to be reserved; that man can never turn to God in truth, that holds fast any *known sin*. There are some indeed darling sins, that may more properly be call'd our own, we being by nature more especially inclin'd to them, and these men would fain have spared, but all must be abandoned, if ever we would have our conversion sincere. As we would have all taken away, as to the guilt of them, so all must be turn'd from, as to the love of them, and going on in them; as all as to their being remitted, so as to their being mortified. We could be willing indeed to have all pardon'd, that none might hurt us, but we are unwilling to part withall, especially such as are as our *right eye*, or our *right hand*; but those must be cast from us here, or we must be cast into hell hereafter, one sin lov'd, and lien in, undoes, for at that our breach, death and damnation will enter, and that very sin (as one expresses it) will be as a milstone about the neck, and sink the soul forever. The Prophet David expresses thus his uprightness, — *I hate every false way*; and — *I kept my self from mine iniquity*; and *I have refrained my feet from every evil way*; and *I will set no evil thing before mine eyes*, &c. Such as still go on in any known

known sin with allowance, be it never so close, are yet but in a state of nature, and never were yet effectually turn'd to God. But that sin is in the room of God, whatever it be, whether Covetousness, or Luxury, or Pride, &c. — *And* Coloss. 3. 5. *Covetousness, which is Idolatry. — Whose God* Philip. 3. 19. *is their Belly.* People may do much, as pray and hear the Word, yea with some joy receive it, and do many things, as Herod did, go far in the Profession of Religion, and yet having still some Herodias, some secret beloved sin that they hug in their bosom, and will not part with, be still in the very gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Acts 8. 23. And Jesus Christ will never lodge in any such heart, where ever any such enemy is yet harboured. It is treason to entertain and harbour any one Traytor, as well as many; and the grounds and reasons for turning from sin, if they be spiritual, and sincere, they hold in every sin, as its contrariety to an holy God, its crossing his will, and opposing his holy, just, and righteous Law; dishonouring his Majesty, and grieving his Spirit, crucifying his Son, defacing his Image, defiling the Sont, and stripping it of its beauty and excellency, &c. And this now more or less is in every sin; and therefore to leave and part with some sins, and to spare and hold fast others, is but hypocrisy, and no sound conversion. And besides are not all our ways before the Lord, in his view? and if therefore we take heed to any of our ways, why not to all? and does not one sin being indulg'd separate from God, as well as many, and expose

Jer. 16. 17.

Psal. 119. 168.

& 139. 3. &c.

pose to ruine? As one leak in a Ship may sink it, one breach in a Castle betray it, one knife at the heart peirce it, as well as many. And therefore there must be here a turning away, and an utterly breaking off from all sin, be it never so sweet, or bring it in never so much pleasure or profit, yet it must be abandoned and forsaken, if we would approve our conversion sincere.

3. *As to the object turn'd to*, viz unto God, and all that is good, and holy, and just, and righteous, to all God's commandements; for there must be no bawking of any, but an universal sincere respect to all, to one as well as another, the least as well as the greatest, the difficultest as well as the easiest. As God says of David, ---*Who shall fulfil all my will, ---and all his judgments were before me; and I esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right: and then* (says he) *shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandements.* Thus as there must be an abstaining from all evil, so a doing of all the contrary good; a fulfilling all righteousness, a sincere purpose, desire, and endeavour at least, to conform to all God hath instituted and commanded, and to stand compleat in his whole will: as it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, *that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandements and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

10. It must be a constant continued turning: as there must be a forsaking of all evil, and a practising of all the contrary good, so this must be constantly, continually, and for ever. It must be

Acts 13. 22.

Psalms 18. 22.

—119. 128.

—v. 6.

Matth. 3. 15.

Col. 4. 12.

Luke 1. 6.

be such a turning, as is without returning to our sins again. Hence some have defin'd it, *the constant turning of a man in his whole life, from all sin, unto God, &c.* For as it is the work of the whole man, so of the whole life, and we are more and more to turn, none being so far turn'd from sin to God, but have need still to turn more. There is an initial, or first repentance, which is at our first calling, and bringing home to God; and then there is an after, or progressive, which is the continuation, and going on forward in the first, throughout the whole course of our lives: and where this after does not succeed, the first was never sincere. Indeed at our first conversion we are turn'd to God, but by our continuing the same, we are turn'd more and more, till we return to that state in which ^{2 Cor. 3. 18.} we once were, and that is not till death; and therefore this turning is a continued act, and daily exercise all this life. And there is indeed matter enough to hold our repentance work all our lives, both in regard of the sin of our natures, hearts, and lives, our daily infirmities, which as we daily renew, so are we to renew our repentance, and to persevere and continue therein to the end, so as not to turn aside again from God and his ways, *to the crooked ways of sin, nor from the holy commandment; for it had been better for such not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them, and the latter end with them is worse than the beginning.* Not but that the best Converts

^{2 Pet. 2. 20. 21, 22.}

- James 3. 2. have their slips, and falls, their deviations, and wanderings here, *for in many things we offend all,*
 Galath. 6. 1. *and are sometimes overtaken in a fault, &c.* but it is not habitual; though they may fall, and go astray, they get up again, and turn into the way: *the high-way of the upright is to depart from evil.* A Sheep may fall into the mire, but does not as a Swine wallow therein; an ordinary habitual customary turning away, or turning aside from God, *to the crooked ways of sin,* is inconsistent with true conversion, and such as do so, God says, *his soul shall have no pleasure in them, but he will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.*
- Hebr. 10. 38.
 Psal. 125. 5.

And thus I have now shewn you more particularly what kind and manner of turning that is, which is so effectual as to a peoples being saved. And now I shall proceed to the second thing I propounded to do, which is, to give you the Reasons, why for God so to *turn a people again,* and *cause his face to shine,* is the onely way of their being sav'd.

CHAP. VIII.

The Reasons and Grounds of the point.

THat for God to turn a people again, and cause his face to shine, is their onely way to be saved, appears,

R. 1. *Because this is the way, which the Church and people of God here betake themselves to. They earnestly*

earnestly desire to be saved, that though it was ill with them at present, that yet it might be well with them for the future. And what do they do? what way do they go, what course do they take to effect this? why, this they do, they earnestly intreat again and again, that *the Lord God of Hosts would turn them again, and cause his face to shine*. Surely had there been any other more effectual way of their weal, they would have made use of it, but they as inspir'd by God, betaking themselves to this, and being so importunate for this, this must needs be the onely sovereign, and most effectual way thereof.

R. 2. Because this is the way which others also have betaken themselves to: as the Church in the very close of the Lamentations, Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, (say they) and we shall be turned, renew our dayes as of old, that is, vouchsafe us thy favour again, and so by doing these for us, change our present sad condition, into that happy state our fathers formerly enjoyed. Thus in this way they seek their weal, and so elsewhere. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease; and God be merciful to us, and bless us: but how would they be blest? and cause thy face to shine upon us. Wherein they plainly allude to the manner of blessing prescrib'd by God himself to Aaron. So Ephraim, Turn thou me, &c. And thus Moses sought the weal of Israel, Psal. 90. 13. Return O Lord; how long? &c. and v. 14. O satisfy us dearly with thy mercy, (that is, thy

Lam. 3. 42.
Psal. 85. 4.
& 67. 1.
Numb. 6. 23;
Jerem. 31. 18;
I 2 favour,

Benignitate
tuâ. 7707

Jucunditas
Domini.

Psalm 4. 6.
—31. 16.
—119. 132,
135. &c.

Hosea 14.

favour, thy loving kindness, for so the same word is rendered elsewhere: as 63. 3. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life, &c.*) that we may rejoyce and be glad all our days: and v. 17. *Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us*, or loveliness, some read, *the pleasantness*, or pleasing look, that is, his amiable favour and grace: let the Lord our God love us, and delight in us, let that beauty be upon us which shines in his favour. The face is the seat of beauty, and love shining in God's face, is *his beauty upon us*. By this expreffion (says Calvin upon the place) we may gather, how incomparable a thing the love and favour of God is. David was often under fore tryals and afflictions, and what does he still crave, for his succour and relief, and that he might be sav'd? it was *God's favour*, that he would make his face to shine upon him, and lift up upon him the light of his countenance.

R. 3. *Because this is the way which the Lord himself (who knows best what tends to his peoples weal) prescribes, and invites them to, as the onely sovereign way thereof.* As in that known place, *Hof. 14. 1, 2.* which contains in it the very way and platform of a peoples weal, and being saved. *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.* The Lord here minds *Israel*, how ill his iniquities had dealt with him, how they had even overthrown him, and laid him low, made his condition exceeding sad, this is all he got by them; and yet the Lord would have it well with him again, and that it might be so, what does

does he advise him? it is to return unto him, as the fountain of all his happiness and welfare, and bids them, as it follows v. 2. *Take with you words and turn to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, &c.* This the Lord prescribes himself, as the onely way of their weal; as if the Lord had said, It is ill indeed with you at present, but if you would have it well with you, then do thus, and say this, *turn to the Lord, and say unto him, and say it not onely with your lips, but with the ferventest and entirest affection of your hearts, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously,* vouchsafe the removal of our sin, and favourable and gracious acceptance with thy self, that sins guilt may be pardoned, its power subdued, its pollution purged, and thy grace obtained, that is in effect, that *God would turn them again, and cause his face to shine.* So that what his people seek elsewhere, that the Lord prescribes here, and prescribes it as the onely way of their weal. And so in many other places, as *Jer. 4. 14.* that *Jerusalem* there might be sav'd from those evils and miseries, which else would certainly and unavoidably come upon her to her utter ruine, he prescribes and invites her seriously and unfeignedly to repent of her wickedness, *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved, how long shall thy vain thoughts lodg within thee?* Those vain thoughts of help and succour by other ways and means, with neglect of the main. And how often, that poor sinners might live, does the Lord (who

Cominet hæc supplicatio unicuique consequendæ salutis viam, viz. si Deus auferat peccata, &c. *Pare-*
us.

Non ore tantum, sed intimo cordis affectu.

swears he had no pleasure in their death) invite them to turn from their way, Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, and repent, and turn from all your transgressions, cast them away from you, and put your abominations out of my sight, &c. and so much does our happiness and good, our being blest depend upon, and consist in the face and favour of God, that when God would have his people blest, this he prescribes and directs as the very way, and means, and platform thereof.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying on this wise, ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. What goodness and kindness is it in God, that as he is most blessed himself, so he will have his people blessed also, and not be blessed alone: and that they may be so, he prescribes this as the very form thereof, and in these phrases the Priests and Levites were to bless Israel, that is, to wish them all good, all happiness and salvation, all being summ'd up in the love of God, in the manifestations of his favour; and therefore because this, and onely this was their blessedness, therefore in different phrases it is prescrib'd again and again, to be supplicated for them.

Benedicere est fausta et salutaria precari: To pray for and wish all happiness and good.

R. 4. Because when the Lord hath purposed to make a people happy, and to have it well with them indeed, this he hath still promised, as the onely effectual way and means thereof. As to Israel:

Israel: I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turn'd away from them. It is very observable, that what the Lord had before prescrib'd, as the onely way of their weal, v. 2. that he here promises v. 4. for to *heal their back-sliding, and love them freely, and turn away from them his anger, it is to take away all iniquity, and receive them graciously.*

Their sins were their sicknesses, and the Lord the great Physician, that they might recover, promises to heal them, that is, not onely not to impute, but pardon what was past, so by his grace to prevent the same for the future: *And I will be as the dew to Israel, &c.* My favour and grace shall be to them as dew to the grass, &c. Thus when the Lord promises happiness and welfare to those that were carried captive, he tells them, *he will acknowledg them, and set his eyes on them for good*, that is, manifest to them his favour, and *they shall* (says he) *return unto me with their whole heart.* See also Ezek. 36. 25, 26. &c. Micah 7. 19. Zachar. 12. 10. &c.

R. 5. Because Jesus Christ himself, the eternal Son of God, was sent, and came into the world to procure our happiness and weal, and our being sav'd this way by calling us to repentance, and saving us from our sins, and by bringing us to God, and procuring for us his favour and gracious acceptance. As he himself, who best knew what was his errand, and what he had in commission, hath told us, *I am come to call sinners to repentance*, and this the Angel witnessed of him, that *his name should be called Jesus, for he should save*

Sanare defectiones idem est, quod et omnem tollere iniquitatem, sicut sepius precati sunt Israelitae. Zanch in locum.

Jer. 24. 5, 6, 7.

Matth 9. 13.

- Acts 3. 26. *his people from their sins: and so his Apostles after, Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, but how? in what way, and by what means? in turning away every one of you from his iniquities, and for this purpose was the son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil: and he is said to send his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and by him we have access into the grace wherein we stand. And the Apostle Peter gives us this account of Christ's sufferings, that they were to bring us to God, to recover us into his favour and friendship again, as our onely happiness and felicity.*
- 1 John 3. 8. *—4. 10.*
- Rom. 5. 2.
- 1 Pet. 3. 18.

- R. 6. Because the Lord hath and doth still send his Ministers to be instrumental of peoples happiness and weal this way; as by opening their eyes, and turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and so be reconciled to God, and brought again into his favour, and hence their ministry is called the ministry of reconciliation. And hence that great Apostle, knowing no better nor more effectual way of peoples weal, it is said, Acts 26. 20. that he shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, &c. yea, & he makes preaching repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, the very summe of his preaching, and that in preaching these he had kept nothing back that was profitable to them, but had declar'd*
- Acts 26. 18.
- 2 Cor. 5. 18, 20
- 3 Cor. 5. 18, 20
- Acts 20. 20,
21, 27.

declar'd to them all the counsel of God. And what way were the Prophets of old sent to prevent peoples ruine, and to bring it to be well with them? was it not by calling and inviting them to return to the Lord, to turn from their evil ways unto him. I might give you multitudes of places to this purpose, but that it is needless, they being every where obvious. So John the Baptist, Christ's harbinger and forerunner, and afterward Jesus Christ himself, whose great business in their preachings was no other, then that sinners might be sav'd, and that it might be well with them: what did they preach? it was *Repentance*. And so when he sent forth the twelve, it is said, *they went out and preached*, and what did they preach? why *that men should repent*. Now had there been any more effectual way or course to have been taken for furthering the good of these they went, or were sent to preach to, surely they would have taken it; but they taking this course, and going this way, clearly demonstrates that this is indeed the way.

Matth. 3. 2.
— 4. 17.
Mark 6. 12.

R. 7. Because *true repentance, sound Evangelical conversion*, does presuppose faith, yea and is a happy fruit and effect thereof: faith being that which dissolves and melts the heart into kindly sorrow and grief for former sins and rebellions, whereby so good a God hath been grieved, and makes the soul to hate and abominate, and resolve against them for the future. And now true faith is every where held forth as saving. *He that believeth shall be saved*: and believe

Pœnitentia ad desperationem trahit, nisi fulciatur verâ fide de remissione peccati, ut est videre in Caino, Judâ, Saulle, &c. *Averinus*.
Mark 16. 16.

Acts 16. 31.

Ephes. 2. 8.

Heb. 10. 39.

1 Pet. 1. 9.

believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved: and we are of them that believe to the saving of the Soul: so receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, &c. And now true conversion must needs be the onely effectual way for a people to be sav'd, because where this is, faith is, yea in order of nature, as I said before, faith precedes it, as the ground and root thereof. Indeed in order of time they are both together, and so neither of them is one before the other, but in the manifestation of them Repentance is first. As the Thunder and Lightning are both at one and the same time, yet is one discerned before the other; and so is repentance both to a man's self, and also to others, sooner discerned and discovered than faith; one as the sap lying hid within, but the other as the bud springing forth, and shewing it self without: but in order of nature faith is first: for 1. God's favour is first apprehended, and remission of sins upon repentance believed, and then upon that comes repentance, and conversion, and alteration of heart and life. And 2. true repentance being a grace, and being *repentance unto life*, whence should it be had but from the fountain thereof? and how should it be had thence but by faith? union being the ground of communion, and interest of influence. So that Jesus Christ must first be received himself, before saving conversion, or any grace can be received: hence our Saviour tells us, *without him we can do nothing*, or severed from him, much less so great a thing as to repent and turn to God.

Some

Zach. 12. 10.

John 15. 5.

Some preparations to repentance, and preparatory beginnings and introductions there are indeed before faith, as Legal fears and terrors, but no true Evangelical repentance: for 3. that is pleasing and acceptable to God, and therefore cannot be without faith, for *without faith it is impossible to please God*, or that any work should please him that does not arise thence. And besides 4. without faith we are spiritually dead, for *the just do live by faith*, Heb. 2. 4. and repentance is the work of the living. But if repentance be after faith, how is it, may some say, that we find repentance put before it? as *Mark 1. 15.* — *Repent ye and believe the Gospel*, and *Acts 20. 21.* To this I answer, that the placing of things in Scripture is not always according to the order of nature, but sometimes the cause is placed after the effect, to shew how we should obtain the effect; as 1. *repent*, and then that ye may repent, *believe*. Again 2. in other places we find it put after faith, as *Acts 12. 21.* *And a great number believed, and turn'd to the Lord.* Thus the goodness of God, and remission of sins by Jesus Christ, being apprehended and imbraced by faith, this brings on conversion. And hence these two are made the summe of the Gospel and of Christian doctrine, and the Apostles preaching. *Acts 20. 20.* *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you. v. 21.* *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:* and this he calls *v. 27. the whole counsel of God*, viz. which God hath revealed

Fides nisi præluceat, nulla vera μετανοια esse potest, licet adsit μετάνοια, qualis fuit in Juda. Tossanus.

Sine fide omnis pœnitentia non solum ociosa est, sed expeditum iter ad desperationem. Mentzerus.

Credendo in Christum convertuntur, quia fides est prævia conversionis, nec ulla est vera conversio sine fide. Tossanus in locum.

His duobus summa doctrinæ Evangelicæ comprehendit solet. Non hic præponitur pœnitentia fidei quasi prior dignitate, vel tempore.

vealed and manifested as concerning our salvation, and how we may come to obtain it. And this by the way may comfort all true converts, as concerning their having had some taste and particular apprehensions of the mercy of God in Christ, and so some measure of faith, this being an evident sign thereof, and an happy effect which flows therefrom; and therefore this must needs be the sovereign way for a people to be saved, for God to turn them again, it presupposing always this true saving faith.

R. 8. That this is the onely way for a people to be saved, for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine, appears from the nature, excellency, and happy effects, of these, and from what follows upon these. As 1. as to conversion, and being turn'd again, this must needs be the way to be sav'd, yea everlastingly sav'd. For 1. such as are indeed turn'd again, are turn'd from that which is, and indeed onely is destructive, which alone does and can indeed destroy, and that is sin and iniquity; and being turn'd from that which is alone destructive, they must needs be in the way to be sav'd: he indeed that pursueth evil, pursues it to his own death, to his own eternal ruine; but now the true convert he turns from it, and forsakes it, and how then should it be his ruine? And hence says the Lord God to the house of Israel, repent, and turn your selves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruine. For you are now turn'd from that which else would, and indeed onely could have been your ruine, there being nothing ruining and

Prov. 11. 16.

Ezek. 18. 30.

and destructive but sin; and therefore a people being turn'd from that which alone is destructive, they must needs be safe, for what should destroy them, sin being alone that which does destroy? 2. *They are turn'd to him who is 1. the sole and sovereign fountain of all happiness and good*, an universal and all-sufficient good, infinitely good, yea the very ocean of good, where all the several streams and channels of good meet and concentre together; and being turn'd to him who is all good, and in whom all good resides, who is the God of Salvations, how can such want salvation, or any other good?

2. *The ultimate good*, the utmost good, that rests and satisfies the soul, to whom when the soul is once come, it has no further to go, except it be still further and nearer to him to whom it is come, he being the true and proper centre of it, where it does acquiesce, and where it is come to it's journey's end, there being nothing beyond him, nor in comparison *besides him*, he is *first*, and *next*, and *last*. And therefore how well must it needs be with the soul, when once it is come to him? but till it is come to him, it is as it were in a maze, and *restless motions*, and *fruitless travels*, seeking rest and satisfaction, but finding none, it turns this way indeed, and moves that way and the other way, to this sin, to that creature, to that vanity, but finds nothing but emptiness, and disappointment; it *snatches on the right hand*, but *is hungry*; and *catches on the left*, but *is not satisfied*, for there is not it's rest, no that is onely in God, for whom it

Bonum in quo
omnia bona, &
sine quo nihil
bonum. Deus
meus, & omnia
mea.

Psalms 73. 25.

Isaiah 9. 20.

Fecisti nos
propter te, Do-
mine, & inquit-
tum est cor
nostrum, donec
requiescat inte.
Hebr. 4. 3.

Micah 2. 10.
Isaiah 28. 14.

Job 28. 14.

If. 44. 20.
Matth. 12. 43.

Eccles. 2. 23.

it was made, and in whom alone it can meet with that repose it makes after. *Rest in the Lord, Psalm 37. 7.* there is no resting but in him. *We* (says the Apostle) *who have believed, do enter into rest*; and so such as do indeed turn to God, there it is the *weary soul is at rest*, and the longing soul is satisfied, and may say with *Jacob, I have enough, or I have all*, for God that is sufficient for himself, must needs be so for the creature: and therefore God being such a good, and a people when turn'd again, being turn'd to him, how can it but be well with them? the soul being then turn'd to his true and proper centre, where it should be, where it was made to be, and 'till where it be it can never be well, why else is it restless till it come there? Of all else we may say, *Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, &c.* And the bed is shorter then that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. As concerning true rest, all the creatures say, as sometimes concerning wisdom, *One says it is not in me, and another it is not in me, &c.* no, it is onely in God. and yet why do men pursue this or that, but to find satisfaction? and yet they cannot; no, whiles a deceived heart turns them aside, they feed but as it were upon ashes, upon husks, and walk through dry places, seeking rest but finding none, as is said of Satan. For all his days are sorrows, and his travel grief, yea his heart taketh not rest in the night, &c. It is said of *Judah, she dwells among the heathen, she finds no rest, and our necks are un-*
der

der persecution, or hard bondage, we labour and have no rest, and how should such have rest that dwell still among sins, and lusts, and leasings, that lie in wickedness, that dwell and abide still among vanities, enemies, devils, murderers, that are still under the heavy servitude of sin, and Satan, that have turn'd their backs upon their rest, and are far from it, that have gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting place, to whom God hath often said as concerning himself, *this is the rest wherein you may cause your weary souls to rest, &c.* but they would not hear, and therefore are restless and unsatisfied, and lie down in sorrow. *1c. 28. 12.*

3. Being turn'd from sin, salvation is that they are now towards, and going on unto; before conversion indeed their backs were upon it, and they were hastening on in a quite contrary way unto it, but now being turn'd again, their backs are upon sin, and hell, and death, and their faces are towards, and they are going on to heaven, and life, and salvation. 4. They walk now in the paths of life, and in the ways of salvation, that lead and bring unto it, and therefore must needs be in the way to be saved. And these ways are Gods ways, the ways of his precepts, which such walk now in. *Psalm 119. 3.* They also do no iniquity, *—18. 21.* they walk in his ways; and I have kept the ways of the Lord. Hence David being a stranger in the earth, he begs of God, that he would not hide his Commandments from him, they being indeed his way to heaven, his way home, the way everlasting, which leadeth to life everlasting. *—119. 19.*

5. Such being truly converted, shall hold

- on and persevere in those ways, and never totally nor finally fall away, but go from strength to strength, till they come and appear before God in that heavenly Sion. The righteous, that is, who is truly turn'd to righteousness, shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands, shall be stronger and stronger. Thus such as being turn'd again, are brought into the right way, they continue therein, yet not so, but that they have their slips and falls as I said before, and their deviations out of the way; but they rise, and get up again, and return into the way, and never finally fall away, for the Lord upholds them with his hand, and they are kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Such therefore, who habitually turn aside to the crooked ways of sin, were never yet truly turn'd again, and therefore will the Lord lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. They went out from us, because they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, &c. But such as are truly turn'd again, they holding out to the end, must needs be saved, as our Saviour hath declar'd, *But he that shall endure to the end the same shall be saved.* 6. Though the consummation and perfect completion of salvation be not till hereafter, yet in some sense such are sav'd already: as 1. From the guilt of sin. 2. From the power and dominion of sin, and so from hell and death, and wrath to come, they repenting and being converted. 3. From the curse and condemnation due unto sin, their sins are pardon'd, and their iniquities forgiven.
- Repent*
- Pfalm 34. 7. Job 17. 9. Pfalm 37. 23. 24. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Pfalm 125. 5. 1 John 2. 19. Matth. 24. 13. Ephes. 2. 8.

Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your *sins* may be blotted out, &c. So—To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin, &c. and salvation, or redemption, does so much consist in remission of sin, that it is call'd it, and put for it. *In whom we have redemption through his blood*, and what is that redemption? wherein especially and chiefly does it consist? it follows, *even the forgiveness of sins*: so, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, or in the remission of their sins, that is, which salvation is by the remission of their sins, or consists in, and depends upon remission of sin; and as such are sav'd at present from the guilt, power, and condemnation of sin, so they shall shortly be sav'd from the very being of sin, yea perfectly sav'd from all evil, and brought to the perfect and full fruition of all good; of which full salvation, in regard of God's purpose and promise, and Christ's purchase, as also their having the earnest and first fruits of it, and their being seal'd to it, they are as sure of it, as if they were already actually possess'd of it. Secondly, that this is the way for a people to be sav'd, and be happy, and have it well with them, for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine, appears from the precious nature and transcendent excellency of the shining of God's face, of divine favour, from what it is, and from what it does and effects. For 1. it is blessedness it self, happiness and salvation it self, as appears from the very

Act. 3. 19.
—16. 18.
Coloss. 1. 14.
Ephes. 1. 7.

Luke 1. 77.

Numb. 6. 22,
23, 24, 25. &c.

Pfalm 67. 1.
Salus a gratio-
sa Dei præsen-
tia, quæ lucida
ejus facies ap-
pellatur, proce-
dit. *Mol.*

Pfalm 42. 5.

יְשׁוּעָה
פָּנָיו salutes
facierum ejus.

Salutem om-
nimodam, quæ
proficiscitur a
facie ejus, in-
tente me sci-
licet gratiose.
Pise.

form of blessing, which God himself did pre-
scribe, which was by supplicating this; and
when the Church and people of God have pray-
ed that God would bless them, they have prayed
for this, that God would cause his face to shine
upon them, and for God to cause his face to
shine, and vouchsafe his favour, it is very salva-
tion it self. And hence the Prophet David calls
it *Salvations*: — *Hope thou in God, for I shall
yet praise him for the help of his countenance,*
thus we render this latter clause, *for the help of
his countenance*: and indeed God's countenance,
his loving kindness, his special grace and favour,
is a *very blessed helpful thing*, nothing helps like
it, and what can help without it? It is, and af-
fords the *best help*, *it helps much*, *it helps migh-*
tily, *it helps sweetly*, *it helps universally*, *it helps*
all, and *every way*, and *in every thing*, as the
matter requires: there's nothing helps like it,
blessed are they that have it for *their help*, and
O that it might be for the help of us all. But the
Original is onely — *the salvations of his face*,
and so *Ainsworth* renders it, that is, *for the sal-*
vations of his face, as the matter of his praise, so
some; or the healths of his countenance, that is,
which his countenance, which his face or favour,
and gracious presence gives to me, or which
proceeds therefrom; and it is put in the plural
number, as is usual among the Hebrews, the
more to heighten the sense, and so it denotes full
and complete, or manifold, and all manner of
salvation. *Chaldee* reads it, *for the redemption
which is from his face*; others read this latter
clause

clause apart, and asunder, and so we find it rendered in the Margent, *his presence is salvation*, that is, his special gracious presence; and so the *Dutch*, *his face*, i.e. his favour, is an assured or manifold salvation. And though Calvin likes of the other reading, as denoting the matter and cause of David's praise, yet the sense (says he) will well agree, if we read it distinctly, as that the countenance of God (which is taken for the manifestation of his favour) is salvation, for no sooner does God dignifie us, so as graciously to behold us, but we are safe. One gracious cast from his eye, one lightsome beam from his serene countenance, is a sufficient counterpane against all troubles, be they what they will, inward or outward. All amount to this, that when God catifies his face to shine, vouchsafes his favour, it is full and complete salvation, it self, and that all salvation consists in, and flows froth his loving countenance. And this must needs be our happiness and salvation here, for it is that which shall be our full, perfect, and complete felicity, in the full enjoyment thereof in heaven. And they shall see his face. — And sett'st me before thy face for ever, and whom have I in heaven but thee? &c. And he also shall be my salvation, for an hypocrite shall not come before him, &c. 2. This will be sure to effect and accomplish whatever is requisite, and necessary, as to our being sav'd, as to our being happy, and having it well with us, both here and hereafter. Those whom God favours, he will work all their works in them, and perform all things for them. The shining of

Non malè
conveniet sen-
sus, si seorsim
legamus salu-
tes esse vultus
Dei, quia simul
ac respicere
suos dignatur
salvos præstat.
Calvin. in 16-
cum.

Revel. 22. 4.
Psal. 41. 12.
— 73. 25.
Job 23. 16.

Isa. 26. 12.
Psal. 97. 2.

1 Pet. 1. 5.

Jude 24.

God's face engages him to the putting forth of the power of his hand, whereby his people are not onely sav'd and preserv'd here, but kept to that salvation ready to be reveal'd in the last time, he is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, and his loving kindness makes him willing, for this is the very root, spring, and fountain of all good to man, his favour; so that when his heart is once set upon us, his hand cannot be shut, but open'd to us. — He

Psalm 18. 19.

— 41.

delivered me, because he delighted in me: and because thou hadst a favour to them, and because of the light of thy countenance, thou didst so and so for them. And hence are those expressions, *If I have found grace in thy sight, if I have found favour in thy eyes, do so and so; and make (says David) thy face shine upon thy servant, and teach me thy statutes, and according to thy loving kindness hear me, quicken me, &c.* yea that blessed man of God, for effecting all his good, and for salvation and deliverance out of all his distress, he desires but this, that God would send out his light and his truth. O send out thy light and thy truth, that is, the light of thy countenance, vouchsafe me but thy favour, and perform but thy promise, i. e. made, thereof, and all the darkness of my present so sad and gloomy condition shall be dispelled. *Let them lead me (says he) let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles, i. e. to thy Sanctuary, to the place of thy publick worship, where I long so much to be. O whither will not the*

light

Per lucem intelligitur favor, & veritatem adjungit, quia lucem non nisi ex Dei promissionibus, sperabat. Calvin in locum.

light of God's favour lead us and bring us? it will bring us to be happy here, and blessed for ever hereafter; it will bring us into the way of all our weal, to the enjoyment of God in his ordinances, and then above ordinances, even to the full and immediate enjoyment of himself for ever; it will guide us *with his counsels*, and after receive us to his glory. Lead us in the path of life, and then bring us to the place of life; lead us in the way everlasting, and then bring us to the life everlasting; in the paths of righteousness, and then bring us to those new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness; uphold us in integrity here, and then set us before his face for ever hereafter; it will make us fit and meet for heaven, and then bring us to heaven; lead us in safety through these bottoms of death, and this valley of misery and tears here below, and then bring us and exalt us to those mountains of Spices, and those hills of Myrrhe and Frankincense above; it will cause God to follow us with goodness all the days of our life here, and then to bring us to partake of that goodness, which he hath laid up for those that fear him elsewhere. Which because David cannot express, he admires, *Psalms 31. 19. O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee?*

3. As it will accomplish all, so it is all, God's favour, his face, all that is truly excellent, amiable, profitable, and desireable.

1. It is light. *Psalms 43. 3. Send out thy light. Psalms 89. 15. They shall walk O Lord*
in

Lucem & veritatem appellat favorem & auxilium omnibus piis promissum à Deo, quibus rebus pelluntur tenebræ calamitatum, &c.

Ad illud templum immortale, ubi ruinen ipsius augustissimum perpetuis hymnis celebrent mentes beatæ.

Psalm 36. 9.

in the light of thy countenance. And how sweetly and comfortably must they needs walk, who walk in that light, *for with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light, i. e. in thy favour,* when thou art pleased to shew us thy face, and fatherly countenance in thy son, *shall we see light,* that is enjoy lively comfort, and joy and gladness of heart. So Job 29. 3. *When his Lamp shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness,* that is, when he abode with me by his favour, and by it I passed through and overcame the miseries and adversities of this life.

Pl. 63. 3.

—119. 88.

Vitam reddit
verè vitalem.
Jam. 4. 14.

Pl. 103. 15, 16
17.

Pl. 106. 4.

2. *It is life.* Psalm 30. 5. *In his favour is life.* Many live, but no soul truly lives, but in his favour, in his sight, and in the light of his countenance. Hos 6. 2. --- *and we shall live in his sight*; yea it is better than life. For 1. people may live, yea and have all accommodations of life, and yet be miserable, but a soul cannot have the favour of God but be happy. 2. It is better than life, for it is the very life and happiness of our life, and without it life is no better than a kind of death. 3. *Life soon fades away,* and fails, it is even but as a vapour, *that appears for a little while, and then vanishes*; but the favour of God is for ever, it is everlasting. 4. Life is common to all, but God's favour peculiar only to a few. 5. Life may become a burden, and people may grow weary of it, but never of God's favour. 6. The favour of God is absolutely and indispensably necessary, but so is not life. &c.

3. *It is felicity.* Hence while others make out after other goods, David seeks after this as the onely happiness, and as that alone which could render him blessed. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good, Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Psalm 4. 6.

4. *It is safety and security.* And hence the Lord is said to shield us therewith. *For thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.* And Fear not Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant, save me for thy mercies sake.* —5. 12. Luke 1. 30. Psalm 31. 16.

5. *It is health.* Psalm. 42. 11. *Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* God and his favour is our health, and makes the countenance look healthful, and cheerful; whereas its want or withdrawing, is the souls sickness as it were, and makes the countenance sad, heavy, and cast down like the look of one that is sick. Obtexisti faciem tuam, & ægrotavimus; illuminata faciem, & salvi erimus. *Austin.*

6. *It is strength.* *For the joy of the Lord is your strength,* i. e. the joy of his face that he favours you. This is your strength, that which fortifies you; it makes to go from strength to strength, and causes a man to lift up his feet, as Jacob, after he had met with God at Beithel. *And Jacob went on his journey.* Hebr. *lift up his feet*, that is, being strengthened by the late vision, he went on cheerfully and courageously in his journey. Levavit pedes suos. Phrasi Hebraicâ emphaticè significat eum alacriter, & instar cursoris indecessi perrexisse. *Pareus in loc.*

7. *It is joy, yea exceeding joy.* Psalm 43. 4. *Then will I go to the Altar of God, unto God*

my exceeding joy: the Hebrew is, the gladness of my joy; the Lord and his favour is not onely our joy, but exceeding joy, the joy of our joy, that is, the chief, the choice, the cream, the crown, the top, the head of our joy. Psalm 16.

11. In thy presence, i. e. in thy special and gracious presence, or in, or with thy face, is fulness of joy. I have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased, for thou hast made him most blessed for ever, thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance: it makes exceeding happy, and exceedingly glad. It is the greatest cheerer, the choicest cordial: for thy love is better than wine, and we will be glad and rejoyce in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.

8. It is glory, it is our honour and exaltation: For thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted: he also exalteth the horn of his people; he and his favour, whose name alone is excellent, and whose glory is above the earth and heaven. And who should, or what should exalt his people, if not God, and his favour? It is a crowning mercy,

Psalm 103. 4. — who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, the favour of God, the loving kindness of God, and those special peculiar tender mercies, which flow from his very bowels as it were, from his tender intimate and affectionate love, these crown, these are our honour and ornament. With favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield: the Hebrew is crown him; And so the Dutch and others read it, thou shalt crown

Sovereign way of being saved.

137

crown him with thy favourableness, or well pleasing complacency, *as with a target*, as with a buckler, with favourable acceptation, thou wilt crown him. Not only does glory, life and immortality crown hereafter, but the love and favour of God crowns here: yea, all the Gold, and Gems, and Rubies, and richest and precious stones in the world, set and compos'd together, can never make such a Crown for the head, as the favour of God puts upon the soul.

Ut scuto voluntate coronabis eum.

חֶסֶדְךָ
Coronabis.

With favour wilt thou crown him. In the 2 Sam.

12. 30. we read there of a Crown, *the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones*, which according to the weight of the Sanctuary weighed above an hundred pound, but according to the ordinary talent above fifty four pound, but the Crown of Gods favour exceeds it and excels it. Thus the favour of God is not only *Shield and Buckler*, but *Crown also*; yea 'tis any thing, every thing that is truly excellent, comfortable, and commodious, and that his people stand in need for it to be unto them:

But thou O Lord art a shield for me; my glory, Psalm 3. 3.

and the lifter up of my head. In that day shall Isa. 28. 5.

the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people,

&c. As he said to Paul, *his grace is sufficient for us*, or enough for us, and is all in all to us, his accepting grace, and his helping and sustaining grace, his favour, and what flows therefrom.

2 Cor. 12. 9.
Favor Dei &
auxilium spiritus sancti a favore isto proveniens.

4. *It covers and silences all that God has against his people.* So that though his people may have many failings which oppose their weal,

1 Pet. 4. 8.

Prov. 10. 12.

Zeph. 3. 17.

Silebit propter
dilectionem
suam, obmute-
scet in amore
suo.

weal, and might be matter of plea against them, yet God shining on them with his face, he passes them by, and silences all *in his love, for love even in us covers multitudes of sins*, how much more God's love? *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love*, that is, as some render it, *he will take satisfaction and contentment in loving thee*, in the affection he bears to thee. But the Hebrew is, as is noted in the Margent, *he will be silent in his love*, or because of his love, that is, he will bear with thy infirmities, and pass them by, without manifesting any displeasure for them, his love shall answer all objections against thee, so that thy frailties shall not be charged upon thee, but born with. The Hebrew signifies also to be dumb or deaf, and some render it, *he shall be dumb in his love; or deaf*, that is, to speak after the manner of men, his ear shall not hear, nor his mouth utter any accusations against thee, so as to reject thee, though he may humble thee; he will quiet himself in his love, when his anger is ready to be stirr'd, he will pass over many things, and as it were wink at them, because he loves thee, as the tender-hearted loving husband does as to his dear wife, the loving father or mother as to her dear child. So *Hosea 14. 4. I will heal their back-sliding, and whence, I will love them freely, for my anger is turn'd away from him; and Micah 7. 19. He will turn again, i. e. in mercy and loving kindness he will manifest his love, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue*

our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the Sea, drown them in the ocean of his love. Psalm 85. 1. Thou hast been favourable unto thy Land, and then v. 2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.

CHAP. IX.

The Application of the point, and first in general by way of Information, or inference.

IS it the onely way for a people to be saved, for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine, as hath been abundantly made good; then there are several truths that this point doth inform us of, and instruct us in; and several things from hence are deducible, and may be inferr'd.

Use 1. of Information, or inference.

As 1. That then there is a way for a people to be saved, and that let their present state and condition be what it will, be it never so sad, though as sad as this peoples was here, whose prayer God had seemed to be angry with a great while, yea and had fed them with bred of tears, and given them tears to drink in great measure, made them a strife unto their neighbours, and their enemies laugh among themselves, yea though God had planted them as his vine, yet now he had broken down her hedges, so that all they who passed by the way did pluck her. The bore out of the wood did wast it, and the wild beast out of the field

v. 4, 5, 6, 12, 13

field devoured it; yea all God's former mercies were now turned into judgments, and yet were a peoples condition as sad as theirs here, yea sadder, yet there is a way for them to be saved, yea let God ~~but~~ turn them again, and cause his face to shine, and they shall be saved. Thus whatever are a peoples sicknesses or sores, there is a *salve*; whatever their maladies, there is a *remedy*; whatever is their case, there is a way of *cure*. If I shut up heaven (says the Lord) that there be no rain, or if I command the Locusts to devour the Land, or if I send pestilence among my people, that is, whatever judgments I inflict on a people, (for under these are comprised all other) if. v. 14. my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, &c. So if they shall confess their iniquity, &c. and their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, &c. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it. If that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil I thought to do unto them. Is there (says the Prophet) no balm in Gilead, is there no Physician there? Gilead was a place where there was plenty of Balm, and it was famous for the sovereignest Balsams, for from thence they were wont to be transported into other countreys; and there were also store of skilful Physicians, and therefore it was strange, and matter of wonder indeed, that Balm and Physicians should fail and not be had there. But admit there should be no Balm, no not in Gilead, yet is there Balm with

2Chron. 7. 13.

Levit. 26. 40.

Jer. 18. 7, 8.

Jer. 8. 22.

with God; and that all Physicians fail on earth, yet is there a Physician in heaven: who whatever are a peoples maladies, if he do but undertake the cure, will be sure to bring remedy; *who gives help from trouble, when vain is the help of man, and unto whom belong the issues from death. For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee, who yet canst help us and save us from above, though no help nor way of salvation appears from beneath.* Thus there is a way for a people to be saved, whatever is their case; and truly this is a great mercy, and that the Lord is pleased also to point a people to it, when their case hath been exceeding deplorable, and seem'd almost desperate: as Joel 2. in the first chapter, and the former part of the second, what sore and terrible judgments had God threatned, and yet v. 12. *Therefore also now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me, &c. So, Return thou back-sliding Israel, saith the Lord, &c. Who (says the Lord) would set the briars and thorns against me in battel, I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* How desperate seem'd Ninivehs condition, — yet forty days and Niniveh shall be destroyed, and yet there was a remedy, and they betaking themselves to it are saved. And as it is with people, so with a particular person; and as in regard of their miseries, so their iniquities; as Shechaniab said, *We have trespassed against*

Psalms 60. 11.

— 68. 20.

2 Chr. 20. 12.

Hos. 14. 1.

Jer. 3. 12.

Isa. 27. 4, 5.

Jonah 3. 4.

Ezra 102.

Isa. 64. 5.

Isai. 1. 16, 18.

Ps. 130. 7.

Isaiah 55. 7.

יָנִין וְיָנִין
 Et vir iniqui-
 tatis.

our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the Land, directly against God's express Law, *Deut. 7. 3.* yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; our case is not desperate, but we may yet be brought to repentance, and pardoned: --- Behold thou art wroth, for we have sinned; in these is continuance: that is, in those ways of grace and mercy, thou art still the same, and if thou pleasest thus still to shew and manifest thy self, we shall be saved. So, wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, &c. and then, Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow, though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool. These were the deepest Dies, implying whatever their sins were, though never so great, yet upon their repentance they should be graciously and fully pardoned. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption: and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. There is a way for the wicked and most unrighteous man to be saved, which the Lord calls and invites him to. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Hebr. *The man of iniquity*, or made up as it were of iniquity, or the man of wrong or vexation, as some render it, one word signifies both, that hath so much wrong'd, not onely his own soul, but God, & vexed his holy and good Spirit; yet there is a way for such a one to be saved. Let him but forsake his way and his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy

mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Hebr. he will multiply to pardon. So that his pardons shall infinitely exceed his sins, there shall be pardons and to spare, as Paul expresses it, *1 Tim. 1. 14. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, or redundant, superabundant, more than enough, or as it were overfull, enough and to spare, it abounded to flowing over, as the Sea doth above Mole-hills. And because we are ready to be measuring God by our selves, and to think this cannot be done, because we cannot do it, we cannot our selves pass by so many and great provocations, and therefore how should God? hence God foreseeing our low conceits of him, he answers v. 8. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord, v. 9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

ὕπερ πλεονασσε
superabundavit,
plus quam abundavit,
supermultiplicata est.

2. If this be the onely way for a people to be saved, this lets us see, in what an unlikely way and posture we of this Nation are at this day to be saved. And O that we had hearts to bewail it! I am sure we have cause even to have rivers of waters to run down our eyes, as they did Davids, and to wail with the Prophet Jeremy, Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, &c. and to say as the Prophet Isaiah, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, &c. For are we turned again to the Lord? or do we turn from our sins?

Pf. 119. 136.
Jer. 9. 1.

Isa. 22. 4.

Surely

AMOS 4. 10,
11.

Hos. 7. 9, 10.

Is. 1. 5.

Jer. 6. 29.

Revel. 2. 21.
—9. 20.

Surely as to the generality of people amongst us, nothing less; no nor yet, though God hath inflicted upon us so many sore and heavy judgments, such as scarce have been heard of, nor have been in our days, nor in our fathers days before us, such a *wasting pestilence*, and such *devouring flames*, and many other judgments; and yet such of us as have been spar'd, and were pull'd as fire-brands out of the burning, how few of us have repented, and are turned to the Lord. May not the Lord justly take up the same complaint against England, as he did against Israel? *I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt, your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses, &c. yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand pluckt out of the burning, yet have ye not returned to me saith the Lord. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not, yea gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face, and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him for all this: and why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more, &c. The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the foundler melteth in vain, &c. I gave them space to repent, but they did not repent. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, &c. How have we despised the riches of God's goodness and forbearance,*

rance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth us to repentance, that is, not onely affords us time and space to repent, but gives us reason to repent, *but after the hardness and impenitency of our hearts we have gone on to treasure up unto our selves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* The Lord hath been hearkning and hearing, and may he not justly complain of us as of the Jews of old, *but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness,* saying what have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battel. When the hand of the Lord hath been lifted up, we have refused to see it, and though his judgments are in the earth, yet learn we not righteousness. We have not said, what have we done? but have not some in the pride and stoutness of their hearts been ready to say, what they would do, even as those in *Isaiah*, *The bricks are fallen down (say they) but we will build with hewn stones; the Sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars: i. e. as if they had said, our houses indeed are down, but what then? we value it not, we will build fairer and better, and will have our streets now broader.* Thus this is all that they made then, & that many make now, of what the Lord hath done; not to be brought thereby to consider what they have done, thus to undo so famous a City, but to resolve what they will do, as to rearing and bettering their houses, but not as to reforming their hearts and lives; and therefore the Lord

Rom. 2. 4.

Jerem. 8. 6.

Isa. 9. 9, 10.

Isa. 9. 11, 12. threatens, he will *set up their enemies, and joyne them against them both before and behind to devour them with open mouth, and yet his anger is not turned away, but his hand stretched out still.* If indeed not to turn again to God, but rather more and more away from God, and to turn still unto sin, and every one to his *course, as the horse rushes into the battel, yea to wax worse and worse, and to have our tongues and doings more and more against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.* If *Atheism, profaneness, licentiousness, superstition, idolatry, strange doctrines, errors, heresies, schisms, apostacies, hypocrisies, infidelity, pride, headiness, high mindedness, hardness of heart, carnal security, presumption, incorrigibleness under judgments, unthankfulness for mercies, unfruitfulness under means, hatred of God, and the power of godliness, contempt of his word and ways, slighting and despising his ordinances, resisting and grieving, and doing despite unto his Spirit, treading under foot his Son, crucifying of him as it were afresh, and putting him to open shame: if shamelessness in sin, declaring it as Sodom, and hiding it not, if swearing, cursing, blaspheming, prophaning God's Name and Sabbaths, if murder, blood, touching blood, adulteries, fornications, wantonness, lasciviousness, and all manner of filthiness and uncleanness; if drunkenness, gluttony, luxury, peoples making their belly their God, and being lovers of pleasures more than of him, glorying in their shame; if cruelty, unmercifulness, maliciousness, despicableness, bitterness,*

unrighteousness, oppression, fraudulent and unjust dealing, lying, slandering, censuring, reviling, variance, strife, debate, differences, divisions, emulations, selfishness, covetousness, earthly-mindedness, &c. In a word, if an inundation of all manner of wickedness and debauchery imaginable, and the Nation becoming a very sink of vice, or at best to have but onely a form of Godliness, but to deny the power thereof, and if for God, in stead of causing his face to shine upon us, to hide it from us, and to turn his back upon us, and to manifest his fore displeasure against us, as he hath done alate, in regard of those heavy judgments he hath sent among us, dealing with us as he threatned to deal with *Jerusalem*, *And I will set my face against them, they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them.* Exek. 15. 7. And has not God dealt so with us? We were scarce got out of one fire which devoured our bodies, which from above the Lord sent into our *bones*, into our strongest parts, that is, sore plagues and pains, which like a fire did pierce deep into, and consume the most solid and strongest parts of the body: as *Jerusalem* complains, *Lam. 1. 13. From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them,* and against how many thousands of families and persons did that fierce and furious fire of the pestilence prevaile? And scarce, as I said, were we got out of that fire, but another fire brake forth, which devoured our houses and estates, and are there not still many sad symptoms of his displeasure upon us,

England's sole and

and for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. And if these now were the way for a people to be saved, we were a Nation in as likely a way and posture to be saved, as ever Nation was under heaven; but if for a people to turn again unto God from their sins, and for God to cause his face to shine, be the way for a people to be saved, and the onely way, as indeed it is, then the Lord have mercy upon us, for we are a Nation in as unlikely a way and posture to be saved as ever Nation was; and if we go on and continue still in this way, *we unto us*, for we reward not onely evill for good unto God, who hath not utterly destroy'd us as our sins deserv'd, but we reward evill to our selves, even to our own Souls, and thereby shall hasten to bring upon our selves utter ruine and desolation.

3. If this be the onely way for a people to be saved, then it necessarily follows from hence, that the contrary must needs be the onely way for a people to be destroy'd: I mean for a people still to go on in their sins, and not to turn unto the Lord, and for God to hide his face from them, in stead of causing it to shine upon them, or to set it against them; if the former be the way for a people to be happy, certainly the latter is the way for a people to be miserable; if one be the way of their weal, the other of their woe; if one, to have it well with them, the other to have it ill with them; if one to be in a good condition, the other to be in an evill condition, for of contraries there is the same reason.

reason. And this the Scripture abundantly declares, both as concerning people and persons. *Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?* And who are wicked? but such as love, and live, and lie in sin, that make a trade of it, that still continue to go on in it, adding sin to sin, without remorse and turning to God, these are wicked, and is not destruction to these? yes undoubtedly: this interrogation has the force of a vehement affirmation; not onely do such keep off from themselves good, but procure evill, yea destructive evill, which shall certainly one time or other, sooner or later, be the portion of all such as turn not from their sins to God, such continuing such shall as certainly be destroyed, as if it was already. *The turning away of the simple shall slay them.* They are simple ones, to turn away from God and his ways, for whither should any turn away from him, whose face and presence makes Heaven? where can any mend themselves? Is it not simplicity to go from the fountain to a broken Cistern, from light to darkness, from life to death, from God to the Devil, from Heaven to Hell? And this simple turning away of such is destructive, *shall slay them; for as righteousness tendereth to life, so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.* He will after it, as the hunter after his prey, but it is to his own death, his own ruine,--*The perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.* When they leave God, and turn aside from his ways, alter the crooked ways of sin, and refuse to return, this

Job 31. 3.

Prov. 1. 32.

Prov. 11. 19.

—11. 3.

Ezek. 9. 9. 10.
Jer. 15. 7.

Ezekiel. 8. 13.

Isa. 3. 11.
—9. 12, 13.

A summo ad
imum, a præ-
stantissimo ad
abjectissimum.

shall destroy them. When the City was full of perverseness, pertinacious in their way, then says God, *Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, &c. and I will destroy my people, sith they return not from their ways.* They professe themselves indeed to be my people, and call themselves my people, and bear themselves up with this, but let them know, that that privilege of being call'd and accounted my people, shall not secure them, nor save them from destruction; this shall not serve their turns, but *I will for all this destroy them, sith they return not from their ways. I have forsaken my house, I have left my heritage, &c.* Jer. 12. 7. O nothing can secure an impenitent people, that turns not to God, from ruine: destruction and misery are in the ways of sin, and they will be sure one time or other to prove pernicious, and to bring mischief upon the sinner. *But it shall not be well with the wicked; and wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, &c.* --- *For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still: that is, still to execute further judgments, and why, for the people turneth not to him that smiteth them,* (the people, or that people, not my people as before, God will not own them now, but disclaims them as it were) *neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts, nor his face nor grace, that they might turn. --- Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush in one day, that is, make a consumption of all, a Proverbial kind of speech, that is, one and other, high and low, great and mean, Potentate and Peasant, first and*

last : Branches, ye know, are the beauty and strength of the tree, but Rushes are poor mean low things, that grow in the mire, &c. and thus it is interpreted, *v. 15. The ancient and honorable he is the head, and the Prophet that teacheth lies he is the tail,* and the Lord will cut off all, and that suddenly *in one day*, he will quickly dispatch them, and not be long a doing it, and he is resolved on it. So, *In thy filthiness is lewdness,* Exek. 24. 13. that is, pertinacy and obstinacy, *because I have purged thee*, that is, would have purged thee, endeavoured by all ways and means, to have purged thee, have sought to purge thee, 1. by the exhortations, admonitions, and menaces of my Prophets; as also 2. by the inflicting of lesser judgments, (for God hath two sorts of judgments, greater and lesser, rods and Scorpions, *footmen and horsemen*, Jer. 12. 4. *winds to fan and cleanse, and utterly to lay waste*), and *thou wast not purged*, but all hath been vain and fruitless, therefore I will now take another course with thee, *thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more*, viz. by reprehensions and admonitions which have been in vain, and which thou hast not given place to, 'till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee, and so have utterly destroyed thee, 'till I have purged thee out of this world into hell. *I the Lord have spoken it,* v. 14. *it shall come to pass, I will do it, I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent, &c.* And many the like places there are, as these among other which follow. *Prov. 12. 21.—10.*

29.—28. 14.—21. 15, 16.—19. 16.—29. 1.

6. 32. Psalm 9. 5, 17. — 92. 7. — 145. 20.
 Job 36. 10, 11, 12. 1 Sam. 12. 23. Job 4. 8, 9.
 --- 9. 4. &c. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, and forget your selves, and your own interest and concern, in not turning to him, lest he tear you in pieces, (as certainly he will, if ye turn not unto him) and there be none to deliver, nay who can deliver out of his hand? and therefore let destruction from God be a terror, and matter of fear to you now, as it was to Job, that you do not feel it hereafter. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. So, for God to frown, or hide his face from a people or a person, and set it against them, must needs be the way for a people to be destroyed, and to have it ill with them, and to be miserable, as the Scripture abundantly evidences. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled, who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be against a Nation, or against a man onely. The Lord said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be. O how sad, how dismal must their end be that the Lord hides his face from, and that his soul has no pleasure in! Surely the world is not so sad without the Sun, the earth without rain, the body without the soul, as the soul without God and his favour; and as all mercies then go, so all judgments then break in. I will set my face against*
- Isa. 43. 13.
- Job 31. 23.
- Psalm 90. 7, 11.
- Job 34. 29.
- Deut. 32. 20.

gainst them, they shall go out from one fire, and Ezek. 15. 7.
 another fire shall devour them, &c. And I will
 hide my face from them, and they shall be devour- Deut. 31. 17.
 ed, and many evils and troubles shall befall
 them, &c.

4. If this be the only way for a people to be
 saved, and everlastingly saved, then are there but
 few which are like to be saved: why? because
 there are but few who are turned again, and on
 whom God causes his face to shine, but are ra-
 ther under his frowns and displeasure. And
 we know that we are of God, and the whole world I Joh. 3. 19.
 lieth in wickedness, that is, the most and greatest
 part of the world, the whole unregenerate world
 lieth in wickedness, is not turned from it, but
 continues in it, and is under the power and com-
 mand of it, and set upon it, and so like to perish
 for ever in it. Thus the greatest part of the
 world is in a perishing condition, because they
 persist in sin: *Many walk*, says the Apostle,
 but they so walked, as that he could not tell of
 them without weeping; for in stead of turning
 to God, they made their belly their God, and in Phil. 3. 18, 19.
 stead of turning from that which was matter of
 shame, they rather gloried in it, and what could
 the end of such be but destruction? And this is
 like to be the end of most, because they turn
 not to God, nor his ways, from which they have
 turn'd aside, and gone astray. The Lord looked
 down from heaven upon the children of men, to see
 if there were any that did understand and seek
 God, for these are they, and onely they, that
 God regards and looks after. But what report
 does

Psal. 14. 2.

Hos. 11. 7.

Subintelligen-
dum est, Pro-
phetæ. Zanch.Non aspirant
ad Deum, &
hoc sit uno.
consensu, quasi
omnes conspi-
rassent in unâ
& eâdem ma-
litiâ. Calv in
locum
Psal. 20. 4.

—4. 6.

does God give of the matter? it follows, v. 2. *They are all gone aside, or turn'd away from God, and his ways, gone out of the way of holiness and happiness; they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doth good, no not one*: that is, very few, none by nature, and few are brought to do it by grace. *My people are bent to back-sliding from me: though they called them to the most high, none at all would exalt him.* *They, who?* the Prophets, for this is their great work, to call people to the most high, to seek, and turn, and conform to him, to devote themselves to him; whom yet, he being so high and glorious in himself, hath no need of, but sends his Prophets to do this for their own advantage, viz. that coming of from such poor mean low and base things, they should come to him who is the most high: but yet though they called them to the most High, and that with greatest importunity, and upon every opportunity, yet *none at all would exalt him*, or but very few, none in comparison: and so most people, though God be *the most High*, yet in not turning to him, nor seeking of him, they do not exalt him, but rather debase him, preferring mean and contemptible things before him; to which, turning away, and turning aside from him, they betake themselves to. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God, God is not in all his thoughts.* He will seek after vanity and leasing, and so exalt these, but not after God. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good, but few mind or regard, or look after the*

the chief good, God and his favour, and the light of his countenance, *none saith, where is God my maker, &c.* — *They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done, everyone turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battel.* Thus most people live in a neglect of God, they refuse to turn to him, or to seek him or his face, and so most are like to perish and be destroyed for ever.

5. If this be the onely way for a people to be saved, this then gives us to see, the true reason and ground, why the Lord is so exceeding earnest and intent upon this, and does so often and earnestly call and invite people to this, and press upon them this; that they would turn again unto him, and seek him, and his face and favour. Why, it is because this is the very way, and the onely way for them to be saved; and is not there then good cause for it, that he should be so earnest, as the Scripture indeed every where declares him to be? O how often does the Lord there call upon people to turn unto him, and to seek him and his face. *Yet return again unto me, saith the Lord! and return thou back-sliding Israel: and, Turn O back sliding Children, &c.* So, *I have sent also unto you all my servants the Prophets, rising up early, and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evill way, &c.* And, *Thus saith the Lord to the house of Israel, seek ye me and ye shall live; and, seek the Lord, and ye shall live; and, seek ye the Lord while*

Joh 35. 10.

Jerem. 8. 5, 6.

Jer. 3. 1.

v. 12.

14.

Jer. 35. 15.

Amos 5. 4, 6.

If. 55. 6.

Psalm 105. 4.

while he may be found, &c. And, seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore, &c. And so I might give you multitudes of places more, which let us see, how earnest and intent the Lord is upon this, and it is because this is the onely way for people to be saved, to be blessed and happy, and have it well with them, and because else they perish, and are ruined and undone, and it will certainly be ill with them for ever. And hence it is, that the Lord makes use of such pathetical and affectionate expressions.

Ezek. 33. 11.

Say unto them, as I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye dye, O house of Israel. How vehemently does the Lord here expostulate and press this upon them? *Turn ye, turn ye*, which denotes the height and vehemency of his affection and desire, how much his heart was upon it, and is there not good reason for all this? *why?* they *dye*, and are undone, and perish else, *for why will ye dye?* life and death are in these things, in turning or not turning to God; as life is the happy effect of the one, so death and damnation is the fruit of the other. And is it any wonder the Lord is then so earnest and importunate? when our *weal* or our *woe*, when it being *well* or *ill* with us, when our happiness or our misery, our being saved or eternally destroyed, depends upon this. And hence the Lord is not content to speak it once, but speaks it again, calls for it twice, because it was of such absolute and indispensable necessity, and

and not a small matter, nor a business of indifference. And what infinite cause have we then to bless the Lord, that he should be so intent upon this, so frequently and earnestly invite us to this, again and again, wherein our own good is so much concerned, and which^e is of such indispensable necessity, that we cannot otherwise but perish: and what can we indeed do better, or wherein can we be more happy than in turning to him?

6. This informs us, and gives us to see, whence it is that God's Prophets formerly, and his Ministers alate, have been and still are so frequent and earnest in preaching and pressing of this: why is it? because so much depends on this, because they know it cannot else be well with them, neither can they be saved, or be happy, nay they know it cannot else but be ill with them, and they must else perish and be undone for ever, and therefore have they and do they still so much urge and press this, not onely speak but cry. *Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former Prophets have cried, thus saith the Lord of hosts, turn ye from your evil ways, and from your evil doings, &c.* They do not onely call, but cry, yea cry out, proclaim, so as the rather to be heard, and more to be heeded, they were zealous and earnest therein, why? because the matter was of such importance, and the danger was so great if they did not hearken. And hence is it that Ministers still are so pressing and importunate, as to this they pray and beseech, yea *and if ye will not hear* (saith the Prophet Jere-

Zach. 1. 4.

Jerem. 13. 7.

my

Luke 3. 4.

my) My soul shall mourn in secret for you, and mine eyes weep sore, and run down with tears, &c. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c. Thus the Prophets and the Apostles cryed, and Jesus Christ himself he cryed, John 7. 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. O for poor sinners to come to Christ to believe on him, and repent and turn to the Lord, is a matter of great consequence, of infinite importance, not a thing of indifferency, but of absolute necessity; and hence Jesus Christ is so earnest and intent upon this, as appears by his posture, he stood up, by his vehement speaking, he cried, he spake with a lowd voice, which shewed the fervour and ardency of his Spirit. So it is said of Paul that great Apostle, that he shewed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem, and through all the Coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, &c. It was Paul's great work and main business to have it well with all he came among, his hearts desire was that they might be saved, and therefore was he so intent upon this where ever he came, that they might repent and turn to God, as the onely soveraign way of it, and as knowing it could not else be well with them. Hence it was that that holy Martyr Mr. Bradford, when he came to the stake, cryed out so earnestly and affectionately, O England, England, repent of thy sins, repent of thy sins, he knew it was the onely way of Englands weal then, as it is now; and therefore what-

Acts 26. 20.

whatever is the zeal and fervency of God's Ministers herein, so as that some it may be may think them *besides themselves*, as some did *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 13. yet this being the onely way of their being sav'd, and they being else undone, this gives sufficient reason and ground thereof.

7. This lets us see the reason why the Church and People of God have been so fervent and frequent in their Prayers for this, that God would *turn them again, and cause his face to shine*, as here in one Psalm they instance it no less than thrice, *v.* 3. *v.* 7. and *v.* 19. and can ye blame them, or was there not good reason for it? when as this was the only way for them to be saved, to be happy, and to have it well with them; and how earnest have others also been, as to these? as *David* how often and how exceeding earnestly does he beg that God would *make his face to shine upon him*, and *I entreated thy favour*, or I have earnestly besought thy face, so the *Dutch*, with *my whole heart*, or with all my heart; and good cause, his very happiness and felicity consisting thereon, and flowing therefrom, &c.

Psalm 119. 58.

8. This lets us see, whence it is, that there hath been, and is still *such great joy*, when a *sinner turns to God*, and that both in heaven and earth, as the Scripture declares, *Luk.* 15. 7. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, &c.* and *v.* 10. *Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, &c.* the repenting and turning though

Pœnitentia;
Angelorum delectatio, & hilaritas. gaudent societati suæ restitutos esse, quos in tenebris inferni, ac Satanz potestate constitutos viderant.
Gerhard.

but

Heus, tu peccator, bono animo sis, vides ubi de tuo gaudetur, &c.
Tertull:

Quoties benedicimus, gaudent Angeli, tristantur Demones; quoties à bono deviamus, Diabolum lætificamus, & Angelos suo gaudio defraudamus.

but of one sinner, makes all heaven merry as it were, it causes joy all heaven over, it puts harps as it were into the Angels hands, and songs into their mouths, &c. God the Father rejoiceth, and Jesus Christ rejoiceth, and the Angels rejoice above, and his Ministers and People rejoice beneath. It is said of *Paul and Silas*, that *passing through Phenice and Samaria and declaring the Conversion of the Gentils, they caused great joy unto all the brethren, Acts 15. 3. and Acts 11. 21. A great number believing and turning unto the Lord*, it is said of *Barnabas*, that coming (v. 23.) and seeing the grace of God, *he was glad, &c.* and 2 Cor. 7. 9. *Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, simply made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance, and for that I greatly rejoyce.* What's the reason and ground of this? why the point tells you, because when a sinner repents, and turns again to God, and he causes his face to shine, and vouchsafes him his favour, he is blessed and happy, and safe, and it is and shall certainly be well with him, he is in a good case and condition, all things shall happily succeed to him here, and he shall be eternally saved hereafter. His repentance is *repentance unto life, and unto salvation never to be repented of*, and is not here cause of joy and rejoycing indeed, when a soul is saved that was lost, more worth than a whole world? what should be matter of joy and rejoycing, if not this? *Luke 15. 23. And bring hither the fatted Calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, v. 24. for this my son was dead, and is alive again,*

gain, he was lost and is found, and they began to be merry: and, v. 32. *It was meet we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost and is found.* So that God is so far from refusing any that turn to him, that he rejoiceth very much therein, and is more ready to receive them, than they can be to come unto him.

9. This informs us, and gives us to see, what a choice mercy, and singular priviledg it is for a people to enjoy the ministry of the Word, to have God's messengers and ambassadours sent among them to preach and dispense the same: why? because for a people to be saved, the only way, it being for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine, this is the way and means, which God hath ordered and appointed to effect this, to bring about this, as the Scripture abundantly declares. Thus, when the Lord had appeared to Paul, and made him a Minister, this he declares as the great work and business of his Ministry; *To open peoples eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ;* and this he shewed, 1. to them of *Damascus*, and at *Jerusalem*, and throughout all the coasts of *Judaea*, and then to the *Gentils*, that they should repent and turn to God, &c. and, we preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, &c. This is the great work and business of

Acts 26. 18.
—10.

Acts 14. 17.

M

Ministers

Ministers to shew this, preach this, press this, urge this, exhort and excite to this, yea and to pray for this. This was the great work and business of the Prophets of old, and so ever since: in *Jerem. 25. 4.* the Lord there tells the Jews, that he *sents unto them all his servants the Prophets, rising early, and sending them:* and what was their errand, what did they say? *v. 5.* They said, *turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, &c.* So *Zach. 1. 4.* Be ye not as your Fathers, unto whom the former Prophets have cryed; and what did they cry? *Turn ye now from your evil way, and from your evil doings, &c.* This the Prophets still said, and cry'd, and press'd, and urg'd. O turn ye to God, and his ways, and walk no longer in the ways of sin, for they are dangerous ways, there are Lyons in those ways, that *roaring Lyon that seeks to devour*, and there is hell, and death, and damnation, and all the curses of God in those ways, and there's no going to heaven in them; they are not ways to live in, much less to dye in, and therefore come off from them, and speedily turn to better, and do this or you dye, or you perish. And this is made the great end and business of *John the Baptist's* ministry, to turn people to the Lord, and turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, &c. And many of the children of *Israel* shall be turn to the Lord their God, that is, he by his preaching, being accompanied with the power of the holy Ghost to make it effectual, shall be a means of many of their

Luke 1. 19,

16.

Convertet ratione sui ministerii, prædicando poenitentiam, &c.

Winckelman.

their conversions, and so of their happiness and salvation; this was the work, and should be the happy effect and fruit of his office and employment, as it further follows, *And he shall go before him* (that is, before Christ the Messias) *in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, &c.* The former of these seems at first harsh and difficult, that the *hearts of the fathers should be turned to the children*; one would think the hearts of the children rather should have been turned to their fathers; the place is difficult, and is variously interpreted: if we understand it simply and properly of Parents and Children, we must interpret it of evil Parents, and of good Children that are converted. Thus many times children are converted, and are godly, when parents are wicked and unconverted; and thus for the hearts of the fathers, of the Parents, continuing as yet the Devils children, to be by the ministry of the Word turned to their children being good, and God's children, and so to be converted, and to be of the same mind as they are, is a blessed thing indeed, and much to be wish'd and desired. But 2. some understand it of the stubborn and refractory Jews, that he by his ministry should make to become children of the Church, that is, of the number of those new converts and Christians in those days. Thus some by Fathers understand the unconverted Jews, by Children the Apostles and other Christians newly converted, according to that, *In stead of thy fathers shall be*

Luke 1. 17.

Psalm 49. 16.

Flectet sua effici
caci prædicatione
omnium hominum
ordines ad penitentiam. &c.
Tossan. in loc.

thy children, which thou mayest make Princes in all the Earth. Thus when the Jews were converted to become Christians, and to be of one heart and mind, and to consent in one truth, then were the hearts of the fathers turned to the children. 3. Others, as *Tossanus*, a learned Expositour, understand it, that *John* by his powerful preaching should bring all sorts and orders and degrees of men (whether fathers or children) to repentance, and to serve the Lord with one accord, &c. And some of the Ancients, as *Austin*, and *Jerom*, by the Fathers understand *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the Prophets; and by Children, the Jews, and thus expound it, That when by the preaching of *John*, the Jews should be brought to believe in Christ, in whom the fathers had believed, then should their fathers hearts be turned and affected towards them, which otherwise were averse from them; but then should they acknowledge them, or then may the hearts of the fathers be said to be turned to the children, when being converted themselves, their earnest desires are to their children, that they might be converted also.

5. Others thus, that whereas at this time, when *John* came, all was out of order, and there were many corruptions, errors, schisms, sects, as Pharisees, Sadduces, Herodians, Samaritans, &c. and many differences, divisions, and heart-burnings thereupon, *John* by his preaching being made effectual by the Holy Ghost, should so turn and convert all orders and degrees of men from the errors of their ways, as to heal and reconcile

Docet Angelus
Johannem suo
ministerio patres
& filios ex
isto dissidio, in
unitatem fidei
adducturum,
&c. *Winckelm.*

concile the differences and divisions among themselves, and to bring them to an holy union and mutual love and amity one to, and with another, so as to joyn together as one man to serve the Lord: *so that Ephraim should no more envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim, &c.* And what a blessed work was this, thus in this sense to *turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and of the fathers to the children.* And oh that God would do this work for England, that he would send some *Johns, filled with the holy Ghost* to effect this, that the hearts of all that profess his name might be turned to God, and turned one to another, that all might be *one in the father and the Son, as the father and son are one in themselves*; as Christ prayed that all might serve him with *one shoulder, or one consent*, and his way and name might be one in the earth, and there might be no other strife, but who might serve God best, and love one another most, the performing of this work upon Mount Sion, and on Jerusalem, how would it further the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentils? and how soon then would God *subdue our enemies*, and turn his hand against his and our adversaries round about? And this now, which way soever we take or understand it, it being the work of the ministry, the design of the preaching of the Word, *to turn people to the Lord, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and (as it follows) the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*, that is, to the wisdom of true converts, to that repentance and conversion which

Isa. 11. 13.

John 17. 21.

Zeph. 3. 9.

which they have already been brought to, whereby they are brought to themselves and to a sound mind, and to be wise indeed, as also, it being the work of the ministry of the Word, to reconcile people to God, and to bring them again into favour and friendship with him, and to be at peace with him, and therefore is it called the *ministry and word of reconciliation*. What a choice mercy, and singular priviledg must it needs then be, for a people to enjoy it? and how much should people prize, and esteem, and value it? and as it is said of those, *Acts 14. 48. glorifie it*. If a Traveller was out of his way, and travelling in dangerous paths, where robberies and murthers used to be committed; what a good work was it for one to inform this Traveller of his danger, and to set him into a safe and right way. So if he was fallen, to have one to raise him up again, and this is the work of the ministry. *Psalms 19. 7. The law of the Lord, or the doctrine of the Lord, that is, his holy Word, is perfect converting the soul, it says, this is the way, walk in it;* and what a mercy is it to enjoy such a word? this makes it to such as experience this blessed effect of it, *better to them than thousands of gold and silver*, as David says it was to him, *The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver*, that is, many thousands, though never so many: for was it the gold and silver of many worlds, what could it do or contribute in the least, as to what the Word does?

Psalms 119. 71.

10. This speaks very highly of God's turning

ning a people again, and causing his face to shine, there being so much in them, and that flows from them, that when God vouchsafes these to a people, they are then saved, they are then blessed and happy, and it is well with them, and it shall be well with them for ever hereafter: they are safe, and all shall happily succeed, they are freed from all evil, and in the way of all good; and what blessed things are they that put people into such a condition? O how well does God deal with those he vouchsafes them to? they may well say, *Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, &c.* and, *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee*, whom thou turnest to thee, and turnest thy face unto him, for this is better than life, and man's onely true felicity and sovereign way of being saved, &c. And therefore how excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, (says David) *Psal. 36. 7.* that produces such excellent effects?

Pf. 119. 65.

—65. 4.

—63. 3.

11. This justifies, and much commends solemn days of fasting and humiliation, this being the great work and business of them, to seek God's face, and to further our turning again to him; and this being the onely way to be saved, this speaks such days to be good days, blessed days, and such duties to be good duties, and such a work to be a good work; and it is good for people, they tending so much to their weal, to be much in them, such fasting days proving many times effectual for conversion, and so to salvation, which makes them* festival days to the

*Lachrymæ
pœnitentium,
vinum Ange-
lorum, dum
hic ex animo
lugemus com-
missa, diem
festum Angeli
agunt in cœ-
lesti curiâ.

Angels in heaven, who rejoyce so much (as you heard before) in the conversion of sinners, and to whom penitents tears become as refreshing wine, &c.

12. This speaks afflictions not to be such sad things as many deem them: why? because God makes use of them many times to further and help forward this blessed turn, and this being the onely way for sinners to be saved, and to have it well with them, this speaks well of afflictions. Thus *Manasseh*, who was so grievous a sinner, yet *being in affliction, he sought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly, &c.* and when the prodigal suffered hardship, and was ready to perish with *hunger*, then he resolv'd to *arise and go to his father*: and when God hedged up *Israel's way* with thorns, sent troubles and distresses upon them, then she resolves *to go, and return to her first husband*, not as if they effected this of themselves, but by the Spirits working in them and by them. But whiles sinners live in jollity and prosperity, and have no troubles nor changes, they never think of changing their way, nor returning to God: and thus the *prosperity of fools destroys them*, whereas adversity might be a means to save them, but by the other they are hardened and encouraged to go on still in a course of sin without returning. *Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. They are not in trouble as other men, therefore pride compasses them about, &c. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence,*
- Singulare beneficium crucis quasi spinis occudi viam peccandi.
2 Chron. 33. 12.
Luk. 15. 7, 18.
Hosea 2. 6, 7.
Prov. 1. 32.
Eccles. 8. 11.
Psal. 73. 5, 6.
— 50. 21.
Psal. 50. 21.

lence, thou thoughtest I was such a one altogether as thy self. So, Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way, yet saidst thou not there is no hope; and why? thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore thou wast not grieved, that is, thou hast found comfort by the *Assyrians*, and they promise to strengthen thy hand with help, and therefore thou art encouraged to go on still in thy way; and therefore 'tis a great mercy to such for God to afflict them, and give them trouble and grief, that so the ways of sin may be wearisome and troublesome, and so they may think of returning from them, when in some measure they feel the weight and burden of them; and happy affliction that works to conversion, happy troubles that further a sinner's peace by furthering his turning to God, and putting a stop to him in his sins; that cause sinners to seek the Lord, whom before they forgot, and lived without. And how may this help to sweeten and alleviate the bitterness of afflictions, and though bitter, yet render them better than the sweetest pleasures of sin. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law, &c.* Blessed blacks, that are a means to turn us white; and happy darks, that are a means to turn us to light! But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord, &c. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, &c. In their affliction they will seek me early, &c. But whiles sinners go on in their sins their greatest affliction and punishment is not to be afflicted, their greatest cross and curse is

H. 57. 10.
See also Ps. 55.
19. Jer. 5. 28. &
22. 21. &c.

Ps. 94. 12.

2 Chron. 15. 4
H. 26. 16.

Hos. 5. 15.

Hos. 4. 14.

Vis indignan-
tis Dei terribi-
lem vocem au-
dire, &c. Orig.

Misericordia
omni indigna-
tione crudeli-
or

cross, for such are like to go on still in their sins. And thus that which many sinners count their greatest felicity, to prosper and be without trouble and affliction, in their evil ways, they go on in, it is their greatest misery; and that which they count their greatest priviledg, is their greatest plague, and proves their greatest detriment, there being nothing sadder than a sinner prospering in an evil course, and God not afflicting him, and thus the Lord threatens it. *I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredoms, nor your spouses when they commit adultery, &c.* And this is the greatest punishment, the forest wrath, the highest displeasure, *the furnace is heated here, seven times hotter than ordinary*, for such are like to go on to commit whoredome and adultery still, God withholding those punishments whereby they might be restrain'd, and letting them go on without controule, to their own utter confusion and destruction, not taking any more pains with them by corrections to restrain their courses in sin, but letting them go on still in the full career of their lusts, and be as vile as they will; and this is the heaviest judgment, and argues the hottest displeasure, it is next door to hell, and such are within one step of being as miserable as they can be. Wilt thou, says one, hear the terrible voice of a provoked God, hear it here? *I will not punish, &c.* So, v. 17. and *Matth. 15. 15.* Bernard calls it, a mercy more cruel than all indignation, a killing courtesie, a cut-throat kindness; yet how many are ready to bless themselves,

selves, and think it a fine world to go on in their own ways without trouble, whereas there cannot a greater plague befall them, which made *Luther* cry, *strike Lord, strike, spare not*; and *Feri, Domine, Jeremiah 10. 24. O Lord correct me, but with* *feri, &c.* judgment, &c. And this makes afflictions a great priviledge, a choice mercy, when they further our repentance, and make us change our purpose, and resolve to turn to God.

CHAP. X.

The second Use of the point in general, by way of Exhortation, and first to seek this by Prayer.

THE onely way for a people to be saved, *Use 2. of Exhortation.* is it for God to turn them again, and cause his face to shine? O, as ever then we would be saved, saved our selves, or have others saved, ours saved, the Kingdom saved, Church saved, City, countrey, towns, families, friends, relations, little ones, bodies, souls, religion, lives, liberties, estates, Gospel, or whatever else is near or dear to us; and as ever we would be fav'd indeed, fav'd to purpose, fav'd in mercy, so as to be blessed and happy in being fav'd, and have it well with us, and all happily succeed to us here, and be everlastingly saved hereafter; let us all in the name and fear of God be exhorted, excited, and stirred up, to seek this, beseech this, earnestly

earnestly to intreat and importune this, *O that the Lord God of hosts would turn us again, and cause his face to shine*: let this be our frequent and our fervent, our often and our earnest prayer unto him, and let us continue thus praying, asking, seeking, begging, beseeching, intreating, importuning, knocking, till the Lord is pleased to give us a gracious answer; let us resolve with *Jacob, not to let him go, except he thus bless us*, for nothing can avail us as to our happiness, as to our weal, as to the having it well with us, without this, try we what other ways or courses we will or can, without this they will signifie nothing. Our felicity or our misery, our safety or our peril, our weal or our woe, our having it well with us, or our having it ill with us; in a word, life or death, the blessing or the curse, our being saved, or our being utterly destroyed, it depends upon this, on our being turned or not turned again unto the Lord, and on his favour or frowns, on his love, and grace, and good will, or anger and displeasure, upon his causing his face to shine, or hiding of the same; and not on other things, though we are ready to think otherwise, and strangely therein to mistake. If (think we) times would but turn, & things were but so and so, O we should be a happy people! but let times and things turn which way they will, let them turn as we think never so much for the better, yet if we be not turned again our selves, and God does not cause his face to shine, if he yet shall say, *his soul has no pleasure in us*, O woe unto us, we are yet a miserable and undone

undone people! but let the Lord but do this, which the Church here so earnestly craves, *turn us again to himself, and cause his face to shine*, and then let our condition be what it will, seem outwardly never so calamitous, we cannot but be happy. But otherwise let it seem never so prosperous, we cannot but be miserable. For to be saved from our calamities, and not to be turned from our iniquities, to be saved from our afflictions, and not from our transgressions, from our sufferings, and not from our sins, what is it but to be saved, so as *afterward to be destroyed*, and that with a sorer destruction; as it is said of the people, that *the Lord saved out of* Jude 5; *the Land of Egypt, that he afterward destroyed them that believed not.* And hence when the Psalmist speaks of the Lords redeeming Israel in mercy, he expresseth it thus: *And he shall* Psal. 130. 8; *redeem Israel from all his iniquities.* And therefore let us be intent and earnestly bent upon this, and importunate for this. Let us humbly and earnestly supplicate this, *Turn thou* Lam. 5. 21. *us unto thee O Lord; and we shall be turned, renew our days as of old;* that is vouchsafe to us thy favour. And *turn thou me and I shall be* Jer. 31. 19. *turned*, and let our hearts eccho back to God, as Davids did, *When thou saidst seek ye my face,* Psal. 27. 8; *my heart said unto thee, Thy face Lord will I seek.* And thus in this sense, let not the Lord say, *Seek ye me in vain*, but let us answer his invitation, *O seek we the Lord and his strength, seek we his face evermore, and intreat we his favour with our whole hearts.* Let the Lord hear us,

us, and find us as frequent and as fervent, as often and as earnest, as vehement and as importunate, as the Church and people of God here, who thrice here (as I have said) in one Psalm make this their humble and earnest suit. v. 3. *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved:* and v. 7. *Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved:* and again, v. 19. *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.* And the more to put us upon this, earnestly and importunately to seek these, let us consider these several particulars.

As 1. *That this is that the Lord invites us unto, and that often to seek him, and his face, and that he would take away our iniquities, and turn us from our sins, and when and where God invites and commands, shall not we obey?* And surely if we look about us, it is high time to seek the Lord, and to stir up our selves to take hold of him, now that he seems as it were to be going from us. How readily and cheerfully did David answer God's invitation, when thou saidst *seek ye my face*, that is, my favour, my grace, for favour appears and shines in the face, my gracious benign presence, my heart said unto thee, *thy face Lord will I seek*, he eyes God's command, looks to that, and presently yeilds, and complies; *thy face Lord will I seek*, as if he had said, whatever others seek, let them seek what they will, the face and favour of others, but as for me, this is that I am resolved to seek, and

and this shall be in stead of all to me, thou and thy favour, and herein I freely and willingly comply with thy command; and so should we, as those to whom God had said, *Return ye back-sliding children, and I will heal your back-slidings: Behold, we come unto thee, or behold here are we, so the Dutch, for thou art the Lord our God.* Jer. 3. 22;

2. Let us consider *what great goodness, kindness, and gracious condescension it is in the great God, that he should invite us to seek these, and in inviting us to seek them should shew himself so willing and ready to discover himself, and to communicate them, to diffuse his grace and goodness unto us, yea such goodness, the chief good. Seek ye me, and seek my face, as if the Lord should say, I am for ever blessed my self, and I would have you so too; I am my own happiness, and I would be yours too, which none else, nor any thing else can ever be; I am happy, and I desire to impart happiness to you also, to shine upon you. Seek ye my face, that I may impart that to you, for your felicity that is my own. What kindness is this, that God should be thus willing to bestow good, yea the chief good, to vouchsafe his favour, yea more willing to vouchsafe it then we are for to ask it, so willing as that he becomes a Suitor to us for to seek it, he seeks us to seek him.* Heaven becomes a suitor to Earth, the Creatour to the Creature; he knows our happiness is out of our selves, and wholly and onely in him, and his favour the spring and fountain of all good, and therefore puts us upon this.

3. Le

Job 41. 11.

1 Chron. 29.

11.

Acts 17. 25.

Isa. 40. 17.

3. Let us consider, that the Lord does this, it is *not for any need that he has of us, but because of that need which we have of him*, not as if his happiness could in the least be impaired without us, but because we cannot be happy without him. How should all-sufficiency it self be under any want, or indigency, he who is himself all and every thing, and has every thing, bee in want of any thing? *Whatsoever* (says he) *is under the whole heaven is mine*, yea whatsoever is in heaven, for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth is thine, thine is the kingdom, &c. *neither needs he any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*: or if it could be supposed that he should want any thing, which yet cannot be, no ten thousand times sooner may darkness be in the Sun, drought in the Sea, than any defect in God; but suppose such a thing, what supply could the fountain have from the cistern, yea a broken cistern, the Sea from a drop, the Sun from a candle, the fruitful field from the barren heath, the pleasant garden from the wast wilderness, all-sufficiency from indigency, he who is all, from such, *who are nothing less than nothing and vanity*, a whole world of them, and yet though he hath no need at all of us, that he yet meerly out of that respect he hath to our good, should call upon us, and invite us to seek so great things, so choice mercies, the transcendent excellency and indispensable necessity of which might command our seeking of them, and that with all earnestness, what kindness is this that God should say,

seek,

seek ye me, seek ye my face, why what can we seek better, or that is more? what makes heaven but this? surely there's nothing there in comparison, nor in competition with this. God's face, his special gracious benign presence, it is the heaven of heaven.

4. That the great God should not onely invite us to seek these, but that *he should as it were indent and covenant, and make as it were a contract with us, if we will seek them; make such and such promises to us, and tell us he will do so and so for us if we will seek them; yea, and upon seeking of them think himself as it were obliged to us, though things in themselves so excellent, and of such infinite importance, and of such indispensable necessity: as* — *Seek ye me, and ye shall live; and, seek the Lord, and ye shall live; I will save you alive, I will give you your lives for a prey: why? the Lord's favour is life, yea better than life, and yet says God, seek ye me and ye shall live; so seek ye the Lord, &c. it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger; and, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, &c. then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land, if ye seek my face: and, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you* Now let Heaven and Earth, Angels and men, be astonished, and stand amazed at this. at this way and manner of God, that he should thus as it were indent and covenant to seek such good, how well may we cry out as

Amos 5. 4. 6.

Pl. 30. 5.

— 63. 3.

Zeph. 2. 3.

2 Chron. 7. 14.

Facies pro gratia, quæ in vultu serenitate, & ad aliquam conversionem, cernitur.

Matth. 6. 33.

2 Sam. 7. 19.

David does in another case, *and is this the manner of men, O Lord God?* do they use thus to do or deal? no, so admirable is thy grace and goodness herein, as it altogether exceeds man's way and manner of practice, and it is peculiar to thy self alone; Great ones do not use to invite and sue unto mean ones, to beg great matters of them, much less will they engage, or covenant, or make promises to them, if they will seek great things; no, their way and manner is quite contrary. A poor creature may, if he beg, get it may be some small matter of them, but if he ask any great matter, he is sent empty away; this is not the way to speed, but to be denied, and have nothing: when a poor creature begs a penny, will they say, ask a shilling? or if he beg a shilling, will they say ask twenty? or if he ask twenty, will they say ask as many pounds, and you shall then have both? no, never was any such thing found among men, this is onely the way and *manner of God*, which therefore let us for ever admire and adore, and withall readily and heartily imbrace and comply with; for as

2 Sam. 7. 20.

David said in another case, *And what can David say more unto thee?* so what can poor creatures say more to thee? what can they ask or desire more that thou shouldest give them, than that thou puttest them upon asking and seeking? And it is that which should very much humble us, that though *the face and favour of God* be that which is our very happiness and felicity, and our chief good, more than a Kingdom, than a world, yea many worlds, were they extant,

extant, yea more than heaven or earth too, yet that we, even we, who profess our selves to be the people of God, and are called by his name, should be so backward for to seek it, and that we should need to be bid, yea to be conditioned and indented with for to seek it, as you have heard! O what strange kind of creatures are we, and how woefully degenerate! Are people backward to seek the Ruler's face, or to intreat the Princes favour, to seek the friendship of great ones? no, *Solomon* tells us, *Many seek the Ruler's favour*, Hebr. *the face of the Ruler*; and, *Many will intreat the favour of the Prince, &c.* and are we backward to seek the face and favour of the great God? are people backward to seek and desire life? no, *Satan* in that said truly, — *skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life*: and, *what man is he that desireth life?* &c. *Austin* brings in all sorts, saying, I do, and I do, and I do, — all desire life. Why, the favour of God is life, yea better than life, and yet we no more desire it! so backward to seek it! how should it humble us, and stir us up the more to seek it for the future? and if this be the will and command, and counsel of God, let us say with *David*, *I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law, this thy law is within my heart*; I do readily and heartily reverence it, embrace it, and yeild to it, and I will bless the Lord *who hath given me this counsel*: and is this that (Lord) which thou wouldst have me to do? Lord, I will do it, and thou shalt not say to me, *do this in vain*. There

Prov. 29. 26.

—19. 6.

Hoc Proverbio inertia nostra insigniter coarguitur, ut Deum principum principem non precamur, &c. Cartwright:

Job 2 4.

Ps. 34. 12.

Ego & ego &c.

Ps. 30. 5.

—63. 3.

Ps. 40. 8.

Psal. 4. 6.

be many that say, who will shew us any good? they are for any good, and who will shew us? no matter who, if any; and but shew it, we will procure it; we will work it out with our own wits, let us alone for that, we have wit enough to compass it, but Lord lift thou up upon us the light of thy countenance, let us but enjoy that good, and that shall be in stead of all, thy favour, Lord, thy face, one good look from thee, one smile from thy countenance, vouchsafe us but this, and for other things do what seems good to thee, we leave them to thy wisdom to dispose as thou seest.

Isa. 53. 1.

5. The more to excite us to supplicate these, let us consider *he onely can effect these, and vouchsafe these.* 1. He onely can turn us again to himself, as was hinted before. This is God's work, the work of no less than an almighty power, an omnipotent arme: we can easily indeed, and of our selves, turn aside and turn away from God, but it is onely the Lord God of Hosts that can reduce us, the arme of Jehovah himself must be revealed to effect this: *who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed.* The Lord himself must speak, and that with a strong hand, so to instruct us, as not to walk any longer as we have done, or as others do, as the Prophet *Isaiah* expresses it, *For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, or* as it is in the Hebr. *in or with strength of hand,* which denotes the strong and powerful operation of the holy Ghost in the Prophet, and some others together with him; *and instructed me that*

Isa. 8. 11.

In fortitudine
manus.

that I should not walk in the way of this people, that is, that I with others of the godly Jews should not follow the manners and practices of the greater sort of that people, and it must be the Lord's speaking, his instructing, and that with *strength of hand*, that must effect this, else all our speaking and preaching, be it never so earnest and often, is but with a weak hand, and ineffectual, and people will walk and go on still as they did; we may tell people they should profit, or declare to them what is profitable; but it is the Lord God onely which *can teach them to profit*, or what is profitable, that is, effectually. So we may *shew them the way they should go*, but the Lord God only can *lead them in the way they should go*. *I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit*, or what is profitable, as the Dutch read it, *which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go*, — Every one therefore (says Christ) *that hath heard and learned of the father, cometh to me*, and so by me to him. This is never done indeed 'till God does it, and therefore how earnest should we be in our addresses to him, that he would do it, for Ministers can not do it, nor can we our selves do it, unless the Lord comes in with his help. *Acts 16. 9.* It is there said *a vision appeared to Paul in the night, there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia and help us*: our great work and business is to help people, to help them in the main, in their chiefest and greatest concerns, to help their souls, to help them as to God, to turn them to him, to further

Isa. 48. 17.

Joh. 6. 45.

1 Kirg. 6. 26,
27.

Isa. 59. 2.

Hes 13. 9.

Is. 57. 17, 18.

Pfalm 51. 12.
Is. 57. 29.

Pf. 4. 6.
— 31. 16.

their being brought home to him, and their being reconcil'd unto him, but our help will signifie little, unless the Lord help, as the King said to that woman, *unless the Lord help, how should I help.* 2. *He alone can cause his face to shine,* we can indeed cause it to frown, but he alone must make it smile. We can raise those mists and clouds which obscure and hide his face, and interpose between us and him, and his favour, but he alone can scatter and dispell them: *your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, &c.* that is, have caused him to hide his face from you; you have done this, but I onely can and must do the other, *viz.* remove that which separates, and discover my face, and display my favour; you can procure my displeasure, but I onely must manifest my love; you can erect a partition-wall between me and you, but I onely can throw it down. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help.* Ephraim by the iniquity of his covetousness could cause God to hide himself, and to be wrath, but God alone could restore comforts to him, and to his mourners. David he could lose the joy of God's salvation, but God onely could restore it. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, &c.* We can marre our peace, but God onely can create it, and therefore to him we must seek and earnestly sue, as the Church here, and David and the people of God often elsewhere. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, make thy face to shine upon thy servant, &c.*

6. As he onely can do these, so let us consider *how infinitely able he is to do them*, he being as he is here described, *the Lord God of Hosts. I know (says Job) that thou canst do every thing; and that no thought can be withholden from thee:* that is, whatever thou hast purposed and decreed, can by no means be hindered, or kept from being perform'd. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord? If any man (says Paul) be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are past away, and all things are become new;* and what follows? *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ:* and that was a great work indeed, to reconcile heaven and earth, yea heaven and hell, as it were to reconcile us, when we were such desperate enemies; to heal a breach that was great like the Sea, and which all the creatures in heaven and earth, Angels and men, could never have effected any thing, as to the making of it up: *and all things are of him, who hath done so great things already, viz. which concern this new Creation, greater than the first; all things, be they never so many, or never so great, he can make new heavens, and new earth, and new hearts, and new spirits, yea all new;* and how should we then resolve with David, *I will cry unto God most high, unto God who performeth all things for me;* and can perform all things for thee, be they never so many, never so great, all things that concern thy weal, thy happiness, thy soul, thy salvation, thy conversion, and restoring thee into his face and favour here, and to eternal felicity hereafter.

Job: 42. 2.

Gen. 18. 14.

2 Cor. 5. 17

Psal. 57. 2.

We read often in Scripture of that Phrase, (and it is very observable) of God's commanding such and such things, such and such mercies, and blessings: as of his *commanding deliverances* for Jacob, of his *commanding strength*, of his *commanding the blessing, even life for evermore*.
 Psal. 34. 4. — 68. 28. — 133. 3. We beg and intreat, and humbly supplicate these, but God he can and does command these, he can with speed, power, and authority send these, exhibit these; he can command *conversion*, and his *loving kindness*, and the *light of his countenance*, as the Psalmist expresses it, *Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me: command his loving kindness*, that is, that it come to me, and comfort and save me. David at this time was in a very sad afflicted condition, *all thy waves and thy billows* (says he in the foregoing verse) *are gone over me*, and that now which he expects and counts upon for his comfort, both day and night, is the *loving kindness of God*, the favour of God, the *shining of his face*, and this (says he) *the Lord will command*, he will send forth to it a *Mandamus*, or commission, as it were, to go to him; he does not, nor need not stand treating about going, or intreating it to go, but he bids it go, lays his charge and command upon it to go; go to such a Soul, and it goes; and come to such a Soul, and it comes; it obeys him, and indeed onely him; we may wish it, desire it, beg it, intreat it, but he can command it, and powerfully and effectually command it, so as to do its work. It seems

Viz. ut ad me
veniat. Ps. &c.

to be a phrase taken from Kings and great Commanders in the field, whose way is to command such and such things, and whose words of command stand for laws. So do God's, he commands his loving kindness to go, and he commands it to act and work, to do its work, to comfort, and cheer, and revive, and when he commands it to do so, it powerfully and effectually does it, *it giveth songs in the night*, and causes even *in darkness to arise light*; he commands the sense of his love, and the blessed effects and fruits of it upon the Soul. The Lord makes that which his Ministers preach, for the peace and comfort of his people, to be effectual to help their peace and comfort, and so *creates the fruit of their lips peace*. It is said of *Jacob*, *that all his sons and his daughters rose up to comfort him*, because of his grief, upon his supposing his son *Joseph* to be rent in pieces, *but he refused to be comforted*; so would deserted souls whatever we preached as making for their comfort, did not the Lord command it: but the Lord says, Go loving-kindness to such a soul, to such a drooping heart, and cheer and revive it, and comfort it, and it goes, and it acts, and does its work and errand it is sent about.

7. Let us consider not onely how able, but also how *willing he is to do these, to turn us again, and cause his face to shine*, if we do indeed seek unto him to do them. For 1. what mean else those *frequent and earnest invitations to seek them*? those gracious promises of obtaining them, if we do indeed seek them? as, *Ask, and it*

Mandare benignitatem dicitur Deus, cum facit ut sensus ejus erga nos, a nobis percipiatur, & recipia experiantur, Mell.

Gen. 37. 35.

Luke 11. 9.
Amos 5. 5.

it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, &c. and seek ye me, and ye shall live, &c. And 3. why else does the Lord continue still the seasons of grace, and means of converting and turning us again to himself, and bringing us into his favour? And 4. continue still to exercise such patience and long suffering toward us, what is the meaning thereof?) The Apostle Peter tells us, it is because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 1. He is not slack, as if he regarded not what was done here upon the earth, but sat in heaven as one of the Idol-Gods. Nor 2. as if he was not sensible, or laid not to heart men's carriages towards him: O he apprehends, and is very sensible of the wrong done to him, as he often in Scripture expresses it. Numb. 14. 11. How long will this people provoke me, &c. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, &c. Behold I am pressed under you, as a Cart is pressed that is full of sheaves: and, I have wearied me with thine iniquities: and, Because I am broke with their whorish heart: and, God is angry with the wicked every day, &c. But it is because he is patient and long suffering, which was part of his name, which he proclaimed before Moses, as his glory. Exod. 34. 6. So that men count him slack, when he is onely patient, and bearing long with sinners, not willing that they should perish, but come

Deus expectat
conversionem
nostram, & ut
revertamur
ipsi ad gratiam:
expectat
gemitus sed
temporales, ut
remittat aeter-
nos, lachrymas
nostras, ut pro-
fundat pietatem
suam.

Ambr.

Amos 4. 13.

Isa. 43. 24.

Ezek. 6. 9.

Psalms 7. 11.

come to repentance, and therefore vouchsafes them time, and gives them space to repent; and hence v. 15. *account* (says the Apostle) *that the long suffering of the Lord is salvation*, that is, that the Lord defers his coming to judgment; account of this as that which the Lord does, as tending to your salvation, and as very serviceable for the furthering thereof, in giving you time to repent and turn to him. He might have sent you to Hell, as soon as ever ye came into the world, or cut you off many years since, as he hath done many thousands of others, cut you off in your youth, while ye were pursuing your youthful lusts, but that he hath still born with you, and spared you from time to time: this is the meaning thereof, that he is willing ye should not perish, but repent and turn unto him, and so recover his favour here, and eternal salvation hereafter.

8. The more yet to encourage us in our suits, notwithstanding our own sinfulness and unworthiness, let us in our addresses to God consider, *that when any are turned again unto the Lord, and have his face shine upon them, it is from meer free grace, and undeserved kindness*. This and this alone is that which puts him upon it, and not any thing in those whom he turns, and on whom he causes his face to shine: the meer favour of God bestows the first grace, and following grace, and it is *from grace* that he exhibits *grace*, and turns any by his *grace*; it is from *favour* that he vouchsafes *favour*, from meer good will that he manifests *good will*, and
from

James 1. 18.
 Βαλθητω, quia
 voluit, because
 he would.

Eph. 2. 8.
 v. 4. 5.

Titus 3. 5.

Hof. 14. 4.

II. 43. 4.

Iter ad grati-
 am est per gra-
 tiam, per quæ
 ipsam venitur
 ad ipsam.
 Prosper.

from his face that he causes his face to shine, and from the light of his countenance that he lifts it up. It is not that he hath any need of us, or any motive from us, except our misery : and this the Scripture every where holds forth. *Of his own will* (that is, of his meer good pleasure and free grace) *begat he us with the word of truth* ; this alone is the spring and original both of our regeneration and salvation. *For by grace ye are saved, but God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us, &c.* — But according to his mercy he *saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost, &c.* I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely, &c. He will turn again, and whence? he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, &c. Since thou wast precious in my sight, that is, since thou becamest dear to me, and I vouchsafed thee grace and favour, thou *hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.* I have manifested my love several ways to thee, and all from love, and meer grace and good will. So that it is of free grace meerly, that God exhibits and shews grace, it is of love that he manifests love : and how much may this encourage poor creatures to seek unto the Lord, that he would turn them again, and *cause his face to shine*, it being nothing but free grace, and meer mercy, that hath put him upon doing this for others ; and though they be so unworthy, yet why may not free and rich grace put God upon doing that for them, which it hath put him upon doing

doing for others ; God never turned any again to himself, or caused his face to shine on them, because they were worthy, but because he was gracious ; not because they deserv'd it, but because it was his good pleasure so to do it ; not because of any merit in them, but because of that mercy that is in himself ; not because of works which they had done, but because of what he was pleas'd of meer mercy and free grace for to do. Thus the Lord tells *Israel*, that because he loved them, he set his love upon them ; here's the spring and rise of all, the good will and pleasure of God, the natural bent, purpose, and inclination of God's heart to do the creature good. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, and he worketh both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Deut. 7. 7, 8.

Rom. 9. 15.

Phil. 2. 13.

κατὰ τὴν ἐκδοχήαν, pro gratuita sua benevolentia. Pise.

9. Let us consider, that as it is from free grace, that any are turned again, so it is by grace, that they are turned, as from favouring accepting grace, so by sanctifying renewing grace ; as from the freeness of the one, so by the effectual operation of the other, it is free grace alone that puts God upon doing, and then sanctifying grace that does it. Look what ever any have been, or are, as to any saving work of conversion upon the soul ; and turning them again unto the Lord, as it has been wholly upon the account of free accepting grace, so it has been wholly by the powerful operation of sanctifying renewing grace, as meerly from grace, so wholly by grace, and whatever any have been

2 Cor. 3. 18.

Psal. 51. 12.

Joh. 3. 8.

1 Cor. 15. 8, 9,
10.

Quicquid est,
non sibi, aut
meritis suis,
sed soli gratiæ
Dei tribuit.
Pareus.

been, or are, as to any saving work, it is *by the grace of God that they are what they are*, and what that grace hath done for others, that sometimes were, what thou now art, the same can it effect for thee. *We all*, says the Apostle, *with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory*: But how? *by the Spirit of the Lord*, and the Spirit of the Lord is free, not only as making free, or being freely given, but as acting freely, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, &c.* and so does the Spirit breath freely where he pleases, and can cause the same gales of grace to breath upon thee, as he hath done upon others; as God vouchsafeth his favour, so he also gives grace, and works by his grace, where, when, and on whom he pleases, and all, that any are, or have, it is by that grace, as the Apostle expresseth it, as concerning himself, that they are what they are, and have what they have. *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God, but by the grace of God I am what I am.* what I am as to that change that is now wrought in me, as to any saving work of conversion upon my soul, as to being a true convert, a true Christian and believer, as to being an Apostle, and a preacher, who before was a persecutor, as to what I thus am, as it is meerly *from grace*, so it is wholly *by grace that I am what I am*, and others whatever they are, being by grace what

what they are as to any saving work of grace, why by the same grace mayest not thou be the same they are? Is not grace as free and as effectual for thee, as for another? can it not do and effect that for thee, that it hath done for others? Take grace away, and others are what thou art; let grace work upon thee, and thou shalt be the same as others are. O what may not free grace put God upon, and what will not effectual grace do.

And God is able (as the Apostle speaks) to make all grace to abound towards you, that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. What cause have we to adore the fulness of this Scripture! here are five *alls*. 1. *All grace*, and not some onely. 2. *All ways*, and not now and then onely. 3. *All-sufficiency*, and not some sufficiency onely. 4. *In all things*, and not in some onely. 5. *To every or all good works*: and all grace abound as to all these, what wants can exceed such supplies? what indigencies such sufficiency? and what cannot such grace do?

10. Consider how far soever thou mayest have turned away, or turned aside from God, yet God has turned again as great sinners, and turners aside as thou hast been, or art. *Ephes. 2. 1.* And you hath he quickened, which were dead in sins and trespasses, not onely asleep but dead, and yet quickened; and not onely dark, but darkness it self, in the abstract, and yet made light in the Lord. If sinners indeed had never heard of any great sinners that God had turned again from their sins to himself, or that it was

not

2 Cor. 9. 8.
πάντα, ἐν πάν-
τι, παντοτε,
πάντα, εἰς πάντα.

not better with them then, than before, when they served their lusts, they might have the more plea, but there are many preidents in sacred Writ, and if with mourning and humiliation thou turnest with them, thou shalt be happy with them. We find in the 15. of *Luke*, that the Prodigal there went a great way off from his father, he took his journey not into some neer adjacent parts, but *into a far countrey*, and there he spends all, makes himself a meer bankrupt, so that he falls to feed Swine, and feeds on *the husks that the Swine did eat*, and yet could not have his belly full of them neither; and yet this Prodigal he is brought to himself, and brought home again to his father, and there he is kist and embrac'd, and has the best his fathers house can afford. How exceeding far had *Manasseh* turn'd away from God, yea how exceedingly had he turn'd against him? we scarce read of any that ever did worse; read 2 *Chron.* 33. from the 1. v. to the 10. 2 *Kings* 21. from the 1. v. to the 17. It is said, *he used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits, and wizards, and wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger: he made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom, &c.* and yet *Manasseh* is made a Convert, and turn'd again to the Lord, the Lord he turns to *Manasseh*, and turns *Manasseh* again to himself. So what a persecutor was *Paul*, he *breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, &c.* *Acts* 9. 1, 2. yea, as himself says, he was
exceedingly

exceedingly mad against them, Acts 26. 11. and yet this persecutor is turned to be a Preacher, and to prosecute what he formerly sought to destroy. Mary Magdalene had seven Devils lodged in her, that is, many, and yet Jesus Christ casts them all out, and makes that heart where so many Devils had lodged, fit for himself to lodge in, who had the seven Spirits of God, and she, who had been so vile and miserable, he appears first to, and makes the first witness of his resurrection. And such were some of you: what? such kind of things; he does not say such men, or women, but such kind of things, as if the Apostle knew not how to stile them, nor what to call them, and therefore he puts it in the Neuter Gender, such kind of things; O they were sad and strange kind of things indeed! and yet of such kind of things God makes something of, yea makes blessed things of, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. It matters not much whither, or from whence we are fallen, if the Lord undertake but to raise us; nor whither we are wandered, or where we are wilder'd, if he undertake but to reduce us; nor how far we are turned aside, or turned away, if he undertake but to turn us again; no matter what is the sickness, if he be but the Physician, and undertakes the cure: he can do good of any one, be it who it will; that is very encouraging to poor sinners, which he said to Paul, 2 Cor. 12. 7. My grace is sufficient for thee; it is sufficient for the greatest of sinners,

Numerus ceterus pro incerto;

1 Cor. 8. 11. ταῦτα πᾶσι ἵνα ἕκαστος ἑαυτοῦ ὡς ἔχει ἡσυχίαν;

Junius before his conversion, is said to be an Atheist, but afterward became very pious, stiled the Glory of Leyden.

sinners; his *accepting grace is sufficient*, and his *sanctifying renewing grace is sufficient*; one is sufficient against all our unworthiness, and the other is sufficient against all our uncapableness and unsuitness; one is sufficient to put God upon doing what is to be done, and the other is sufficient for to do it; one as to motive, the other as to efficacy; he can *make dry bones live*, and is able of *stones to raise children to Abraham*; he can change condition and disposition, pardon and purge, justify and sanctify, yea do every thing, and perform all things. And therefore let all, even such as have turn'd farthest aside from God, be encouraged to go unto God, and to call upon him, and cry unto him, *to perform all things for them, for all things are of him*, and to perform this for them, *to turn them again, and cause his face to shine*. Say, Lord thou commandest us to turn, O do thou make us to turn! it is thy precept that we should turn, Lord, according to thy promise give us grace for to turn, *Turn us, and we shall be turned, convert us and we shall be converted*; we have turned aside after the world, and vanity, and sin, yea after Satan, but O turn us again to thy self; we have turned aside to our own ways, and after our own lusts, but O turn us again to thee, and thy ways: thou sayest, *Return ye back-sliding children, and I will heal your back-slidings*: and, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*, that thou mayest cause us and inable us to return, *for the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*; *turn us therefore*
and

Ezek. 37. 5, 6,

7. Matth. 3. 9.

Psal. 57. 2.

Jerem. 3. 22.

Jer. 10. 23.

and we shall be turned ; and thou who givest us space to repent, give us grace to repent, and to turn to thee, and that with a true, hearty, real, and universal turn. Lord, every thing within us is turned from thee, and is averse to thee, yea is turned against thee, and therefore do thou by thy grace cause all to turn again to thee, mind, will, heart, affections, all within us, and all without us, that so we may not be half, but whole Converts, and our conversion may not be partial but total, and universal, of the whole man, and from all evil, and to all that is good. Salvation is said to belong unto the Lord, and his blessing to be upon his people ; and let us beg that the Lord would thus save us, and not onely us, our selves, but others also, ours his people, and that this blessing may be upon us all, the blessing of turning us all again to himself, and of causing his face to shine, the blessing of saving conversion, and of Divine favour and affection ; that the Lord would thus save and bless the Nation, this Kingdom, Church, State, Cities, Towns, Families, houses, hearts, even with the great Gospel-blessing of Jesus Christ raised from the dead, in turning us all from our sins and iniquities to himself. Lord, thus bless the house of Israel, and thus bless the house of Aaron, yea thus bless us all both small and great. Let this blessing, O Lord, be upon high and low, rich and poor, mighty and mean, upon Prince and people, upon Court, and City, and Countrey, upon our Metropolis, our chief and Mother-city, yea and upon all her Daughters, our other Cities,

Psal. 3. 8.

Acts 3. 26.

and upon the whole Nation, yea the three Nations, and then shall we be blessed indeed, yea the blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth. Thus though we cannot turn our selves, we may yet pray unto God to turn us, and intreat his favour, the want whereof, as aggravating their sin, the Prophet *Daniel* confesses and bewails. *All this evill is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, &c.* They could not turn of themselves, but they might have prayed to God for grace to turn.

Psal. 115. 15.
Dan. 9. 13.

CHAP. XI.

The second Branch of Exhortation, to adde to our Prayers, our Endeavours.

ANd let us not onely pray, but earnestly endeavour after this, not onely beseech it, but strenuously pursue it, and follow after it; let us joyn to our prayers our pains, and to our desires our labour, care, and industry; setting about it, and setting our selves seriously to it, and laying out our selves to the utmost for the attaining of it, that we may be converted, and turn'd again from our sins to God, and that he may cause his face to shine on us. In all labour (says Solomon) there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth onely to penury, that is, nothing comes of that. As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the

Prov. 14. 23.

—26. 14.

the slothful upon his bed, that is because of his sloath he is still where he was, and hangs where he did, comes not off, and this is his undoing. *The desire of the sloathful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour.* Many wish well to themselves, and they say they do desire grace, but refuse to labour, and this kills them, for grace is not had with wishing. If ever we would be savingly converted, we must not onely wish and desire it, but labour and strive after it, we must *up and be doing*, use diligence. The want of this the Lord complains of concerning that people, as the cause of their ruine. *They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, &c.* not so much as set about it, nor set themselves to it, nor see what they can doe. They will not so much as endeavour, and bend their course that way, nor shew their good will, nor make use of these means which tend towards it, not do what they can do and might; and therefore I do by my Prophets but spend my labour in vain, and I have to do as it were but with beasts and stones rather than men. Indeed I am their God by profession, and I have shewn my self so by the care I have had of them, and the many good offices I have done for them; and yet though I am their God, and the fountain and well-spring of all their good, and their happiness is to turn to me, yet they will not so much as once *frame their doings to turn unto me.* And this is an heavy aggravation of peoples impenitency, and leaves them altogether inexcusable, when they will not endeavour, nor so much as make use of the means

Prov. 21. 25.
Immoritur op-
tando, nihil o-
peratur, non
utitur mediis
quibus potiri
optatis queat,
&c. Remus in
locum.

Hos. 5. 4.

Non adjicient
studia sua, ut
convertantur
ad Deum su-
um. Video me
operam ludere,
quia mihi ne-
gotium est po-
tius cum brutis
animalibus,
vel cum saxis
quam cum ho-
minibus, &c.
Calvin. in lo-
cum.

as in reference to so great a concern, not do what they might do : we are not able indeed to turn our selves ; no, conversion is too great a work, and lies beyond our line, and we should get a due sense thereof, so as to drive us to God for help, but yet we may endeavour it, and attempt something as in reference to it ; something we may do, but what (you will say) may we do ? and what would you have us for to do ? I shall shew you in several particulars.

1. *Attend constantly on the ministry of the Word*, wait still upon God in his ways, and in the use of those means he hath instituted, appointed, and set apart to be instrumental as to that great work of turning you again to himself, and of bringing you into favour, and recovering again his face. Do as those impotent folk, they could not indeed heal themselves, yea, but they could and did lie *at the Pool, waiting for the moving of the waters*, that they might be healed. Get there still where Christ walks, and where he works, as *Zachew* he got up into a tree, in the way where Christ was to pass, and who knows but Christ may look upon thee, as he did upon him, and it may be a time of love, and he may say to thee, *though in thy blood, live*, and bring saving conversion, & salvation home to thy soul. It is good being in God's ways, how many hath he savingly and graciously met there, and his power hath been present *to heal them, to convert and save them*. The very work and business that he sends his Ministers about, it is (as he told *Paul* when he had converted him from a Persecutor,

John 5. 3.

Luke 19. 4.

to be a Preacher, and as you have heard) *to open sinners eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, &c.* Acts 26. 18.

And how many thousands of souls are there, who have experienc'd this, and for whom it hath been effected by their means, and why may it not be effected for thee also? The word is called *a word of grace, a converting word*, and wait on it for God to make it so to thy soul. Of his own will (says the Apostle) *he begat us by the word of truth*, and why by the same word may he not beget thee, if thou attend upon it? God sends his Ministers to help people in this great work, *And a Vision appeared to Paul in the night*, Acts 16. 9.

there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him saying, *come over into Macedonia and help us.*

Now be sure then to be there where he vouchsafeth such help, which is the best help, and better a thousand times than the having such come that might help you in other matters, as in your estates and in matters of the world, though it was to compass never so much of it. And how sad must their condition then needs be, and how inexcusable will they be found at that great day, who refuse this help, who carelessly neglect or despise the Ministry appointed for so blessed an end, how deservedly and inexcusably will they perish? and how by this act of theirs do they their own selves judg themselves unworthy of conversion and salvation, as the Apostle told those refractory Jews. *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing* Acts 13. 46.

England's sole and

seeing you put it from you, and judg your selves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles. And theretore as ever you would be turned again unto God, wait for it, in a constant and diligent attending upon the plain and powerful preaching of the word, which is the great organ and instrument which God hath instituted for that purpose; and how many blessed and glorious conversions have been effected by it, and that upon most indisposed and unlikely subjects? and this is the great reason why Satan does so much rage, and set himself against it, it being the great Engine and Battery which God makes use of to destroy his Kingdom, and to rescue poor souls out of his snares, and to turn them to himself: and this, when you go to attend upon the word preach'd, you are chiefly to mind and look after, that it may have this blessed effect upon your souls, to turn you to God, and you should be restless and unsatisfied till it be so. *The Law of the Lord*, that is, the doctrine of the word, *is perfect converting the soul*. And O that it might convert mine, that it might have the same effectual work upon me, which it hath had upon others: and the rather you are to mind this, because if you be not convertible by the word, neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead. *Luke 16. 30. And he said, nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. v. 31. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses, and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. And because*

Psalm 12. 7.

because knowledg and understanding is initial and introductory, and primarily necessary as to conversion ; for as God in the first Creation wrought light, so he does in conversion of a sinner, who by nature is a miserable chaos of confusion ; and seeing it is peoples ignorance and stupidity, and their want of knowledg of God, and themselves of their malady and remedy, that does so hinder and indispose them as to conversion, beg of God that the ministry of the word, which is called the key of knowledg, may be effectual to give thee knowledg and understanding, and that thine eyes may *be anointed with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* Do as Solomon adviseth, *Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.* O how many are destroyed, and never converted, because of their ignorance and stupidity, because *the scales of ignorance are yet upon their eyes,* and *the vail upon their hearts !* ignorance being not onely a great evil it self, but a very source of all evils, and that which hinders all good ; and therefore be earnest for the removal of it.

2. *When the Spirit at any time comes to thy soul,* as he does to all at one time or other, and begins to stir and move thy heart, the Spirit it may be would convince thee of sin, and humble thy soul, and bring thee to sorrow for sin here, to prevent worse, even eternal horrors hereafter. For do any think ever to go to heaven, and never to have their hearts toucht for their sins ? It is as impossible, as for a man below to reach the heavens with his hands. Now when I say the Spirit begins to do this, this is thy season,
prize

prize it and improve it, *take the present opportunity*, and beseech him whatever he does to go on. O cherish and make much of such motions, for they are very precious! and do not quench them, nor resist the Spirit, but give up thy self to be wrought upon by him; do not say, Go away, & come again another time. Remember, the Spirit, which is the worker of repentance, is not at thy beck, neither canst thou set him a work when thou pleasest, and therefore let him work when he pleases, and remember God hath said, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man*, and therefore, *To day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts.*

Gen. 6. 3.

Hebr. 3. 7, 8.

Pl. 119. 115.

Ut ii qui in
Sole ambulantes
nigredinem sibi
contrahunt:
sic qui cum sapientibus
verisunt, sapere
discunt. Remus.

3. Break off from your evil company, and have no longer fellowship nor society with them, but say, *depart from me ye evil doers*, bid them be packing, and gone; *forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding.* As you love your souls forsake such, you dye else, your souls perish else, but if you forsake such you are in the way to live, to attain to that repentance which is unto life, and to *go in the way of understanding*, which is to depart from evil. I dare be bold to say, and affirm, that there is no one thing under heaven that is a greater hinderance or obstacle to the work of saving conversion, and bringing a sinner home unto God, than loose, jovial, vain, wicked company: for these take off the sinner from being ever serious and considerate of his present condition, and from weighing his sins, and the evil of his ways, and more and more hardens him therein, and so proves a marvelous impediment

ment as to any such work. How often in affliction, and under a Sermon, does the heart of a sinner seem to be wrought upon, and he is under some conviction of the evil of his former ways, and courses, and resolves to amend; but afterwards by falling into vain and evil company, all dwindles away and withers, and comes to nothing; and *as a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.* Thus how many have been affected, and almost perswaded to be converts at a Sermon one day, & by falling into evil company have been the same again the next day. And therefore, hence it was, that the Apostle *Peter*, when he perceived that the Jews he had been preaching unto, were affected with what he had delivered, and their hearts began to be wrought upon, and to be toucht for their sin, they asking him and the rest of the Apostles, what they should do? he answers first to them in general, *Repent*; but then afterward, that so good a work might not be hindered, nor obstructed, he gives them withall that special advice, *Save your selves from this untoward generation*; as if the Apostle had said, I perceive God has begun indeed to touch your hearts for your sins, and my advice to you is, to repent and turn to the Lord; but now that you be not hindered therein, this *I testifie and exhort too*, that you associate no longer as you have done with this untoward generation, but save your selves from it, else they will flatten and deaden that work again, and so hinder the conversion and salvation of your souls: and though other words,

with

Acts 2. 40.

with which the Apostle did testifie and exhort, might be left out ; yet this, as that which was of so great concern, the holy Ghost would have recorded : *And with many other words did he testifie and exhort, saying, Save your selves from this untoward generation : And so do you, quit Egypt, if ever you would come to Canaan ; and the Devil's disciples, if ever you would become Christ's : bid them depart from you now, that Christ do not bid you for ever depart from him, avoid them as you would a Pest-house, or those that have the plague, as being more dangerous and pernicious. Who can touch Pitch, and not be defiled therewith ? or lie on a dunghill, and not smell of it ? Examples are more prevalent than precepts, and soon make impression. Hence,*

Pf. 26. 4, 5.

—26. 9.

—28. 3.

I have not sat, says David, with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers ; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked. David prays, that God would not gather his soul with sinners, nor draw him away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity : but if we would have our souls not gathered with sinners, nor be drawn away with the wicked hereafter, we must get far from them here, else we shall be in danger to be like them here, and so be gathered and drawn away with them, and to them hereafter.

4. *Get into good company, into the society of such as are already turned, and they may further and help forward yours. He that walketh with wise men (says Solomon) shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. As no one thing*

Prov. 13. 20.

thing hath a greater force or influence for hurt, than the company which people keep, and ordinarily associate themselves with, so for good, as to hinder a sinners conversion, and turning to God. So to futher it; *He that walketh with wise men*, that is, with godly men, with such who are converted, and turned to God, and so from being disobedient, to the wisdom of the just, with such who fear the Lord and depart from evil, (for these the Scripture every where declares to be wise) and he now that walks with such, that associates and ordinarily converses with such, *he shall be wise*, that is, he is in the ready way to become wise, to attain to that heavenly wisdom, which consists in our repenting, and turning again to the Lord: for such will be advising him, counselling him, exhorting him, supplicating grace and mercy for him, shewing him the danger of going on in sin, and the excellency, necessity, and advantage of turning to God: *But a companion of fools shall be destroyed*, that is, of wicked men, who still impenitently go on in their sins without remorse, for all such are fools, as the Scripture every where brands them, and a companion of such fools shall be destroyed: and why? because by keeping company with such fools, he becomes a fool himself, and is hindered from becoming wise, from turning to God, wherein indeed true wisdom does consist. The *Hebrew* is, *broken*, that is judicially broken, because by keeping company with such fools, he is hardened, and kept from being penitentially broken. As he that comes where

sweet

ἡ λαὸν μὴ γὰρ
αὐτὸ ἐδίδα-
μαθίς ἐστι.
Theogn.
Societas bono-
rum bonos,
improborum
improbos red-
dit.

Prov. 14. 16.
Job 18. 28.
Psalm 111. 10.
Luk. 1. 17. &c.

Ut lutum fari-
nam, acetum
vinum corrup-
pit: ita mali
homines bo-
nos. Chrys.

Qui in taberna
nuguentaria
relederunt, &
paulò diutius
commorati
sunt, odorem
secundum loci fe-
runt, &c.

sweet Spices and Oyntments: are stirring, does carry away some of the sweet savour, though he think not of it; so he that converseth with good men, shall get good, somewhat of the sweet savour that is manifest by them, may abide upon him. 2 Cor. 2. 14. — *and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledg by us in every place: and we are v. 15. a sweet savour of Christ, a similitude from the Incense, which being kindled, spreads it self through the Temple, and over the whole congregation. Thus Christ's Ministers and believers, go up and down perfum'd as it were; and whereas others savour of sin and Satan, and hell, and death, they savour of Christ, and grace, and heaven, and holiness, which savour they send out to others that associate with them; and therefore get into the company of such, who are of the same society as the Angels and Spirits of just men made perfect.*

5. *Get sometimes alone, and retire in secret, and there seriously weigh and consider your ways and your doings, how it is with you, what is your present state and condition, what you have done and are doing, and whither you are going, or what ever else may further and help forward this work. This the Lord often and earnestly calls for. Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways, Hebr. set your heart upon your ways: which manner of speech signifies so to consider of a thing, as to come thereby to understand it thoroughly; and because this is a duty that naturally men are so averse from, and backward to, and a duty which so seldom*
is

Hag. 1. 5, 7.
Ponite cor vestrum
super vias vestras.

is done to any purpose, and yet withall a duty so necessary, the want of it being the main cause why people go on still in the evil of their ways, therefore it is once and again prest. God tells the sinner, *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self; but says God, I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes, that is, I will bring thy sins as an army against thee, and I will set them all in order, as it were, in rank and file, before thee, as the Hebrew word signifies; as if God had said, Thou thoughtest thy sins were scattered, and disperst, and that thou shouldest hear no more of them; that they should never be rallied nor brought together again, but I assure thee (says the Lord himself,) it is otherwise, as thou shalt shortly find, when I shall muster them up all against thee, as it were in battel array: here a Regiment of evil thoughts, and there of evil actions; here of oaths, and there of lies, and there of false dealings; here of blasphemies; and there of prophanations of God's Sabbaths, &c. And what shall these make thee, but as God threatened *Pashur*, a meer *Magor Missabab*, i.e. fear round about, a terror to thy self, and a terror to all about thee: and what does the Lord advise now the sinner in this case, as his great concern? why, *Consider this* (says he) *ye shall forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Consider this*, that is, what I say and threaten, and will do, to prevent your utter and inevitable ruine, which else will be, if ye*

Psal. 50. 21.

מַעֲרָכָה

In ordine proponam; verbum militare;

Deus distincto ordine catalogum omnium scelerum proponet, quem (velint nolint) legere & agnoscere cogentur. Calvin. in loc.

Jer. 20. 4.

Psal. 50. 22.

- ye do not. O it is inconsiderateness that undoes so many thousands! God considers sinners ways; and courses, but they themselves do not, nor will not, as the Lord complains. *And they consider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness:* and God declares this as the reason why, when *he hearkened, and heard no man speak right, no man repented him of his wickedness,* it was because *no man said, no man considered, what have I done,* hence every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle; whereas *David* tells us, *I thought on my ways,* I considered my ways how they were out of order, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I weighed and pondered my ways, I turned them upside down, as it were, looked all over them, and on every side of them, both above and beneath. So much the Hebrew word notes, and it seems to be a phrase taken from curious works, which are the same on both sides, so that they who work them, must turn them on every side, &c. And thus did *David*, as in reference to his ways, which caused him to turn his feet unto God's testimonies: so it is said of the Prodigal, that when *he came to himself, he said,* to whom did he say? *to and with himself,* he weighed and considered, *how many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?* As if he had said, O what a beast, what a brute am I, thus to feed swine, and to feed upon husks that swine do eat, and to be in want of them too, when I might have bread enough in my father's house! why there

is never a hired servant in my father's house, but is in a far better case than I; and the serious weighing and considering of this, and dwelling in his thoughts upon this, made him resolve: as *v. 18. I will arise and go to my father, &c.* So it is said of Peter, *when he thought thereon, he wept, Mark 14. 72.* And the Church *Lam. 3. 19. remembring her affliction and her misery,* that is, still remembring it, and meditating upon it, and especially her sin, which occasioned it, *the wormwood and the gall, the bitterness in sin as well as for sin, My soul hath them (says she) still in remembrance, v. 20. and is humbled in me, &c.* And beg of God to make thee know, whilst yet thou goest on in thy sins, the danger thou art in, where thou art, and whither thou art going, upon what slippery and dangerous precipices thou walkest, and where thou wilt shortly be, unless thou gettest out of the way where thou art. *Pro. 21. 16. The man that wanders out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead.* Such a one, unless he turn, will be shortly lodg'd in hell among the Devils, and the damned. Now this you may do, and this you are greatly concern'd to do, to consider your ways, &c. and that you may do this, you must get alone, get in secret; for there is no casting up of accounts in a crowd, no, a man must go aside and alone to do this, as the Prophet expresses it, *Lam. 3. 28. he sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, &c. and Zach. 12. 12, 13, 14. Their families apart, and their wives apart. and, Psalm 4. 4. stand in*

England's sole and

awe and sin not, commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still, that is, get alone, be still, and quiet, and then commune with your own hearts; if you would consider your ways, you must sequester your selves, and having done thus, go unto God, and lay open your ways, and your case, and condition, which you have weighed and considered, before him; confess your sins, and humble your souls, and seek his face, and supplicate his mercy and grace, that he would say of you as sometimes he did of Ephraim, when he had gone on frowardly in the way of his heart, I have seen his ways, and will heal him, &c. I will turn him, and he shall be turned; I will pardon, and not impute what is past, and prevent and help against the same for the future.

Isa. 57. 17, 18.

Occasio facit
furem.

6. *Occasion your hearts this way* as much as you can, I mean as to this blessed turn; we say Occasion makes a Theef, it furthers and helps forward his theevery; and so it may tend to make a Penitent: occasion, as it is of great force as to that which is evil, so it may prove also as to that which is good: it is a main thing as in matters of sin, so of grace, and therefore if thou wouldest repent, and turn to God, occasion thy heart that way, and it may much further thee therein, as by often reading, and hearing, and meditating on the Word, and conferring of the same, especially such a word as tends most to help forward such a work; so by considering thy sins, and what thy misery is till thou dost turn, and how happy thou shalt be when thou art.

art turned, by considering the motives to repentance, as its excellency, equity, utility, and absolute and indispensable necessity, &c. as shall be afterward held forth. Thus give your hearts as many occasions that way as possible ye can, and they may take and avail at length. Why are men so carnal, and worldly, and earthly? why? they occasion their hearts still that way, they are still speaking, thinking, and plodding on the world; they speak of little else, hear little else, think of little else. *1 John 4. 5. They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, &c. they mind earthly things. Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, &c.* And if men would more occasion their hearts that way, they might become more penitent: *while I was musing (says David) the fire burned, and Peter whiles he thought thereon, and so occasioned his heart that way, he wept.* You should deal with your hearts, as it is reported *Junius* his father once in another case dealt with him, who perceiving his son Atheistical, and knowing the reading of the Scriptures might be a principal means under God to cure his Atheism; to occasion him that way, he lays a Bible in every Room, that so where ever he came he might still have occasion to look into it, and read it; he could go into no room but still he found a Bible haunting him, and as it were inviting him to read it, and being thus occasioned to read it, at length he read it, and was thereby (says the Story) converted of his Atheism: so though repentance seem never so difficult at first to cor-

Philip. 3. 19.

Psal. 49. 11.

Pf. 39. 3.

Mark 14. 72.

Premenda est
ocasio.
Nehem. 4. 12.

rupt nature, yet frequently occasioning your hearts that way, might much help you, if you would but be still haunting your hearts with what might further it, as with precepts, promises, threatnings, judgments, mercies, Law, Gospel, &c. and never giving over 'till something comes of it, for occasions are to be prest and urg'd to the utmost, and throughly to be improv'd, as it is said of those Jews, (I do but allude to it) *that they said unto Nehemiah, and the rest that were building, ten times, that is, very often, in all ways that ye passe to and again, the enemy will be upon you; and thus still haunting them with warnings, at length they looked about, and set guards in every place. And so deal with your hearts, and warn them often, again and again tell them; O! if you do not repent, the enemy will be upon you, the wrath and curse of God will be upon you, hardness of heart will be upon you, all those judgments threatened will be upon you; but if you repent, the blessing and favour of God will be upon you, grace, and mercy, and peace will be upon you, all the good promised will be upon you, yea God himself will dwell in you, and his Angels will guard you, and minister unto you, &c. and tell your hearts such and such things often, yea never give over 'till you have brought it to some good issue. Thus as others occasion their hearts sinward, hell-ward, vanity-ward, world-ward, so do you grace-ward, heaven-ward, repentance-ward, conversion-ward, and so salvation-ward:*

7. *Remember God of his promises, and in your*

your prayers plead, and press, and urge the same. Lord, hast thou not in thy Word of free grace, made promises not only to grace, but of grace, and do Lord, as thou hast said, be as good as thy word, O remember thy promise! Thus turn promises into prayers, as these and the like. *Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, &c.* and, *I will* Prov. 1. 23. II. 44. 3.
pour water upon him that is thirsty, and not onely so, but floods upon the dry ground, that is, my Spirit upon barren and fruitless hearts, that have neither saving knowledg, nor are able to perform any good work. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy off-spring. Then II. 35. 5, 6, 7.
the eyes of the blind shall be opened, &c. and in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, that is, the Spirit shall be abundantly poured out upon all sorts, even upon such as were as a wilderness, and as a dry and barren heath. And the parched ground shall become a poole, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of Dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. But I said, how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27. Jer. 3. 19.
land,

land? &c. that is, being spoken of God after the manner of men, I thus thought and considered with my self, *how shall I put thee among the children? &c.* How shall I make such as you my people, who are so vile and unworthy, and adopt you to be my children, and so make you heirs of that heavenly and glorious *Canaan*, of which the other was but a type? Now to this God himself makes answer within himself, and the more to express the greatness of his mercy, and the riches of his free grace against their unworthiness, he says, *Thou shalt call me my father, and shalt not turn away from me*, that is, I will by my Spirit, being a Spirit of conversion and adoption, cause thee to return, and to cry unto me in faith, *Abba father*, and thou shalt not depart from me. Now remember God of these and the like promises, and press them, and plead them, and urge them, turn them into prayers, 'till God turn them into performances. So I might mention others, *I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely*: and, *they shall return to me with their whole heart*: and, *all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, &c.* And because knowledg and understanding is, as I said, initial, and so influential as to conversion, urge the promises thereof, as these, and the like. *For the earth shall be full of the knowledg of the Lord as the waters cover the Sea*: and, *They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, &c.* and, *they shall be all taught of God.* *Is. 54.13. Joh. 6.45. &c.*

Hos. 14. 4.

Jer. 24. 7.

Psalm 22. 27.

Is. 11. 9.

Jer. 31. 34.

8. *Follow after faith, labour to believe:* for true kindly Evangelical repentance, and saving conversion, does (as I said) arise and flow from faith, and is an happy effect and fruit thereof; and faith, at least in some measure, must go before it, as the ground and root thereof. A true repenting sinner, is a believing sinner, that hath had some apprehensions and persuasions of the mercy of God in Christ, and of forgiveness of sin, in and through him, to such as are penitent. And without the root, how should you partake of the fruit, or without the cause, of the effect? it is said, *A great number believed and turned to the Lord*, if ever we would turn to the Lord indeed, we must first believe, which should make us therefore the more to study and endeavour by all possible ways and means to obtain that precious grace of faith, as the Apostle *Peter* calls it: *precious* indeed, for what is there that is *precious*, but faith brings us to obtain it? and this we must in some measure have, if ever we repent and turn to God to purpose; for an unbelieving heart is ever an hard evil and impenitent heart. *Paul* speaking of such as *live godly*, and so are true converts, he speaks of them as being *in Christ Jesus*, that is, interested in him, united to him by faith, as branches into the Vine, members to the head, and such must all be that live godly, for *severed from him they can do nothing*, because in Christ and from Christ is all that strength and ability for to do, and so to repent and turn. *I can* (says *Paul*) *do all things, but it is through Christ which strengtheneth me:*

Non rectè possit agere pœnitentiam, nisi qui speraverit indulgentiam.

Acts II. 21.

2 Pet. I. 1.

Conversio ad Deum completur præcipuè fidem, quâ homo in solo vero Deo fiduciam collocat, &c. Winckelm.

Joh. 15. 5.

so that we must receive Christ before we can walk in Christ, and the obedience of faith must go before the obedience of life; and before we can do any other work to purpose, we must do that great Gospel-work of believing. Faithless persons are ever impenitent and unconverted persons, for whiles they are shut up under unbelief, they are shut out from him and his grace, whence all their ability thereto does and must proceed. Hence says Christ, *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* And therefore how infinitely are we concern'd as to faith, as to believing, for no being turned no being saved, and no faith no being turn'd; and therefore study and labour after faith, and that you may obtain it, attend upon the word preach'd, which is the word of faith, and by hearing of which, faith is said to come; so then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Attend then diligently and constantly upon the Word, and beg of God that *faith may come by it to thy soul*, and when faith once comes, O how much comes! for then Christ comes, grace comes, the Spirit comes, repentance, saving conversion come, and so life, and salvation, and eternal happiness come, heaven comes. And we should labour for increases of faith, as the Disciples cryed, *Lord increase our faith*, for the more faith the more repentance, as the one is maintain'd and nourished, the other is renewed and increased, yea the very being, life, and increase, not onely of this,

but

Fide destituti
nunquam ad
resipiscentiam
veram perveniunt.
Joh. 15. 6.

Rom. 10. 17.

Luk. 17. 5.

but of all other graces depends much upon faith, all other graces thriving or decaying as it were together with it, and how earnestly then should we make out after it?

9. *Live no longer in the common practice of gross sins*, but forthwith break them off, at least as to the outward act, for this you may do, thou canst not indeed convert thy self, nor change thy heart, I but thou mayest forbear, and cease from the gross acts of the sins of thy life, as many have done and do, for fear, or upon some other account, as by the dictates of nature, and the power of moral precepts. History tells, of a certain Heathen, who being a debauched person, and though continuing a Heathen still, yet hearing *Socrates* read his Lectures of Morality, left off his outward debauchery. Thou canst not wash thy self, but thou needest not wallow in the mire, nor tumble in the dirt: thou canst not mortifie sin, but thou mayest forbear to commit such and such gross acts of sin, and perform such and such outward duties, though not after a right manner. Indeed, as to spiritual acts as such, man is impotent, and hath no power, but he has as to moral, he may as to outward acts live soberly and chastly, and may abtain from gross sins, as whoredom, drunkenness, swearing, &c. so he may come to the congregation, hear the word. Was there a strict law made by man, that whoever committed such and such gross sins, or omitted such and such known duties, some sore penalty, as confiscation of goods, or loss of life, should be inflicted, how many

Quoad exte-
nos actus.

Dan. 4. 27.

Vitare occasi-
ones peccandi,
est vitare ipsum
peccatum.

Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5,
8.

many would abstain from those sins which now they commit, and do those duties which now they omit? and therefore they can do it. Thus *Daniel* counsels *Nebuchadnezzar* to break off his sins, his pride, tyranny, and oppressings of God's people, and to practise the contrary virtues; and hereby God is less dishonoured, his wrath less provoked, the Saints less grieved, and others less encouraged to do the like. And if you would be kept from the outward acts, you must shun and avoid the occasions, for the not avoiding of them exposes to the other; he that would not be burn'd, must not come too near the flames, nor be drown'd, the Rivers brink, nor hear the Bell, meddle with the rope. *Solomon* dehorting from being ensnar'd by the *strange woman*, whose lips drop as an honey-comb, and whose mouth is smother than oyl, but whose end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, and whose feet go down to death, and whose steps take hold on hell; he gives this advice, Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, much less knock at her door; flight here is the best fight, and the safest way of victory a speedy retreat. He that would not come into naughty houses, must not come near them, but keep far away, want of which undid that simple young man, *Prov. 7. 8.* he went the way to her house; can we think he would escape the plague, that comes near infected houses, or he avoid the sin, that does what tends or leads to it? It is a tempting of God for one to come where he is like to be tempted, and

and never let such a one look to be safe. Straw will quickly take fire, and Gun-powder is not (says one) more apt to kindle, than our corrupt nature to be provoked to sin, especially that of uncleanness. *Solomon* elsewhere dehorting from drunkenness, says, *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, &c.* that is, avoid the occasions; the eye stirs up desire, and objects move the senses: keep therefore far off from what thou wouldest be freed.

Oculus incitat appetentiam, & objecta movent sensus.

10. *What you do, do speedily*; for there is danger here in delaying, and besides the matter is of so great moment and importance, that it doth not admit of it; we say necessary things fall not under deliberation, but require present expedition. Was a man fallen into the fire, or into the water, was it for him to lye there and deliberate, whither or no he should get up? no, the necessity thereof does not admit it, for unless he rises up, and gets out, he perishes, he is in danger to be burn'd or drown'd. Now whiles you yet go on impenitently in your sins, you are as it were in the fire, and in danger to be drown'd in destruction and perdition: *And some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, &c.* And is not the greatest expedition requisite here, even such as *Solomon* speaks of in case of suretiship, *Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids, deliver thyself as a Roe, &c.* Men do not delay in matters of the world, especially if they be of consequence, and must there onely be delays here? were a mans house on fire, would he delay

De necessariis non est deliberandum.

Jude 23.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Prov. 6. 4. 5.

lay to seek to quench it? or was his estate, much more his life, in danger to be lost, would he delay to seek to save it? But is not the loss of the Soul ten thousand times sadder? If ever you mean to turn from your sins to the Lord, are there not the same reasons for it now, as hereafter? Is not sin evil, bitter, and destructive now, as well as afterward? and does it not now dishonour God, thwart, oppose, provoke, offend, burden, yea weary him? and debase, defile, and wrong your own souls, and threaten your ruine, and hinder your own happiness, comfort, and peace, *separate between you and God* the chief good, and his favour, which is *better than life*? and is not God, you should turn to, as full, lovely, desirable, sovereign, excellent, and all-sufficient a Good now, as he will be afterward? or what other reasons are there for turning from your sins to God that are not now, and the reasons being the same now as hereafter, why should you defer, and go on still to adde further to your own shame, trouble, and grief? O how much more peace and comfort might sinners have, did they sooner break off from their sins, and turn to God, and were they but betimes converted, and brought home to him in their younger days? & how much more honour might they bring to him, and how much more service might they do for him, which they are not capable of till they come to be converted? for till then they are *in the flesh*, that is, in the state of corrupt nature, and so cannot *please God*, nor serve, nor honour him; and yet what

II. 59. 2.

Castigemus igitur mores & moras nostras.

Rom. 8. 8.

is our end ? or what were we made for but this ? or what is it worth the while to live for, but in reference to this ? which makes our life to be life indeed, & without which it is no better than death, that being the very end and business of our living : and though we be, we do not properly live 'till then, *For she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.* And what an honour is it to please, honour, and serve the great God, which is the honour of Angels, and of those blessed Heroes above ? *Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, &c. — And his servants shall serve him, &c.* But 'till you are turned again, you neither do nor can serve God, but serve sin, Satan, your lusts, in stead of the Lord of life and glory. And who would not hasten out of such an estate ? O how good is it to *bear the yoke in our youth*, and feel the bitterness of sin, and abandon it betimes, and not defer what is so infinitely for our own happiness and good ! and yet this is that people are exceeding prone unto, still to put off and procrastinate their turning to God. They deny not but it is to be done, and they say they purpose and resolve to do it, but not yet, all in good time, and so never set upon it, and this is occasioned partly from their sloath, and idleness, partly from their excessive love of their lusts, and sins, and vanities, as also from their hearts, being so much glued to the world, and the cares and incumbrances they have about the same, and their still continuing in a prosperous estate, in health,
and

Fuit non vi-
xit.

1 Tim. 5. 6.

Dan. 7. 10.
Rev. 12. 3.

Pfal. 73. 5.
Jer. 22. 21.

and strength, and not being in *those troubles as others are*. I spake to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst I will not hear, &c. But what contempt do these delays cast upon God, and his favour, and so upon the soul, and upon heaven, and salvation, as if these were not worthy the minding and regarding presently? But the vain things of the world, which cannot profit nor deliver, were to be preferred before them; and therefore the more to put you upon speed and expedition herein, I shall leave with you these following considerations.

Qui pœnitentiam indulgentiam promissit, secure in peccatis pergenti pœnitentiam non promittit.
2 Tim. 2. 25.

1. Consider, *Repentance is not in your power*, nor at your command, to repent when you please; no it is God that gives it, and the Spirit that works it, which is a free agent, and works when and where he pleases, and is not at thy beck; and God who promises pardon to such as repent, does not promise repentance to the secure; thou mayest have time, but want power, have space, but want grace to repent. *If God peradventure will give them repentance, &c.* and therefore put it not off.

2. *It is a great work*, even the work of thy whole man, and thy whole life, and thy whole strength, and will you still put it off, when as so much of thy time, and life, and strength, is spent already? does it need all, and shall it yet have less?

3. *The longer it is deferred, the greater it will be*. It may be as yet thou hast some meltings, some relentings; but sin, the longer it is liv'd in, the more it hardens, and the hardlier it is left:

left

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. There is an inbred natural hardness that is in all by nature, we have all *stony hearts*, but sinners by going on still in sin, and refusing to turn, adde acquired hardness, and the heart becomes more stony, and less capable of the impressions of God's Spirit, and so the sinners condition less hopeful, continuance in sin taking away the sense and feeling of it, and becomes as a millstone about the sinners neck. He that is not fit to repent and turn to God to day, will be more unfit to morrow, and the less time he will have to do it in, and the less strength to do it with: there will be one day more to repent of, and one day less to repent in. The further any go on in the ways of sin, the further off still they go from God, and so their turning again is the more difficult; and therefore it is good to stop betimes, else it will be the harder task; and seldom is it seen, that such as have been long in travel from God in the ways of sin, do bethink themselves of returning. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots, then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Wounds are presently to be healed, else their cure will be harder: and how much easier might this work be, would sinners but set upon it betimes.

4. *The time is short.* It is, as the Apostle expresses it, drawn in, or drawn together, rolled up into a narrow scantling, as Sails use to be by the Mariner, when the Ship draws nigh to the Harbour, so much the Greek word imports; and

Heb. 3. 13.

Ezek. 36. 16.

Qui non est
hodie, cras mi-
nus aptus erit.

Jer. 13. 23.

Principiis obsta, &c.

1 Cor. 7. 29.

συναλει-
νος, terminus
nauticus,

and therefore you had need without any further delay, mind and hasten your great work, and having so little time, lose no more of it, there's water little enough to run in the right channel, and therefore let no more run besides; and your time being so short, can you find in your heart that God should still have less of it, and the Devil, and your lusts, and your vanities more? The Apostle Peter tells us, *The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, &c.* to have gone on in the ways of sin; for the least time is here too much, it being but lost time, and time which sinners imploy to wrong and ruine their own souls in. Take our whole time, all our days, and they are (as the Prophet David expresses it) *but as an hand breadth, and our age is as nothing before God: our life flies away, and our end is contiguous to our beginning. Remember how short my time is, wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* Truly unless we speedily turn to God, and give up our selves to serve him, we seem made but in vain, our time is so short; hence (says David) *God's hands having made him and fashioned him, I made hast and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and was it Methuselah's years, which where above nine hundred, God deserv'd them all, and infinitely more; but being so few, shall we still keep from God more of these few, and give them to his and our worst enemies, to whom we owe none at all; and if God have any, shall he

1 Pet. 4. 3.

Psal. 39. 5.
Vita hominis
subito trans-
volat, & finis
ejus initio fere-
et contiguous.
Psal. 89. 47.

Psal. 119. 60.

he have none but the worst, the bran, the carkass, the lame, infirm service of old age? *Offer it now* Mal. 1. 7. *unto thy Governour.* Some are indeed called at the eleventh hour, but how quickly is it then night, and how little service is God then like to have? The Devil, because his time is short, he hastens the more to do mischief; and wilt not thou, to further thy own souls weal? Epicures say, *Let me eat and drink, for to morrow we dye,* but say thou the contrary, *Let us turn to the Lord, for to morrow we dye,* and remember, that upon this weak wire hangs the heaviest weight, on this little moment depends a twofold eternity.

5. *Our time here is very uncertain,* it cannot be long, but it may be less than you are aware of. If you do not repent to day, you are not sure of to morrow to repent in, for who has given you security of it? *Boast not thyself of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,* no, nor an hour, not a moment, it may bring thee to thy end, to the grave, and that may happen the next moment, which never yet befell thee all thy life. It was a wise answer of a grave person to this purpose, who being invited to a feast on the morrow, answered, *Of many years I have not had a morrow-day to promise to my self.* That rich man in the 12. of Luke, v. 19, 20. he counted indeed of many years, but God called him fool for it, and tells him, *that night his soul should be requir'd of him.* If you do not get turn'd by conversion to day, you may before to morrow be turn'd to destruction, and

Prov. 27. 1.
Nescis quid
serus vespere
veniat.

Accidit in puncto,
quod non
accidit in anno.

Q

your

Pfal. 9. 17.

Nè desperando
peccata augeamus,
propositus est
pœnitentiæ portus;
nè desperando
augeamus, datus est
dies mortis incertus. Gerh.

Vestigia nulla
retrosum.

Post est occasio
calva.

your bodies may not onely be turn'd into the grave, but your souls into hell; and what a sad turn will that be, and had you not need then set about and hasten the other? Remember, your time is not in your hand, in your power, but in God's, he is Lord of our time, and not we, to limit it, to lengthen it out, or cut it off as he pleases; which made *Austin* to profess, that he would not for the gain of a million of worlds be an Atheist for half an hour, *because he knew not, but that God might in that time take him away.*

6. *It is irrevocable*, being once gone, it can by no means be recall'd, no not one moment; it passes and speeds away as an hasty headlong torrent, but never repasses; it is swift, violent, and constant in its progresses, without any the least intermission, stop, or stay, but never admits of any the least retrogresses or going back; here's always ebb, but never flood, always running forward, but never returning backward. How many, when they have been dying, would have given a world for a little time? and others have been heard crying day and night, Call time again, call time again; and another in a despairing condition cryed out, Can you call time again? if so, then there is hope; but it cannot be, there is something before of time to take hold of, but it is bald behind. And how should you hasten then to take the present season? men do it for other matters, as the merchant for buying or selling, the husbandman for sowing, &c. and onely here will you be so foolish

lish

lish as to let it slip, especially when it cannot be recall'd.

7. *The days are evil*, and had ye not need then *redeem the time*? The days are evil, because we are evil, for the days are not morally evil, but evil men, and evil manners make evil days, and the evil of sin procures the evils of troubles and punishment; and our evils of sin being so many, and so exceeding great, *grown up even to the heavens*, what further evils of plagues and punishments may not we fear may be coming upon the Land? And therefore what need had you to lay hold with all speed on the present opportunity, and make the utmost advantage of it, as to the furthering this great work?

8. There's no doing any things, as to this great work, when you are gone hence, and therefore you had need to hasten, and do what you can here; for if it be not done, you are undone for ever. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with might, for there is no work, nor devise, nor knowledg, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest*: there all work ceaseth, the grave is the land of silence, this life is the time of working, but death of cessation, not onely do civil works cease then, as buying, selling, trading, &c. but the religious also, as praying, hearing, repenting, believing, &c. The time for these is onely while you are upon the earth, there are none of these in the grave, nor in hell; and therefore how should you resolve to work the work of him that sent you, while it is day, for when the night cometh no man can work.

Eph. 5. 16.

Ezra 9. 6.

Quando istine excessum fuerit, nullus jam locus poenitentiae, hic vita tenetur aut amittitur. &c. Cyprian.

Joh. 9. 4.

9. You can never come hither again to do it; when once you are gone, there's no return back. As the cloud is consumed, and vanishes away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house; neither shall his place know him any more. I shall be bold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world. And, There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, &c. But man dieth, and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? &c. no more here, where ever he is: not that Job denied, or was ignorant of the resurrection, but he speaks it in regard of a natural life; he shall come no more into this world, to live and dwell here amongst men as he did, or to dispatch any work, no, if his work was not done before he went hence, he cannot return again to do it, but it must cease for ever, death as to that being the utter conclusion of man: he is gone, and returns no more, and had you not need then to hasten to do your work, when (as Job speaks) after a few years are come, it may be weeks, or days, or hours, you shall go the way whence you shall not return.

Job 7. 9, 10.
 II. 38. 11.
 Job 14. 7, 10.
 Non negatur resurrectio ad vitam, sed ad finalem vitam: *Pined.*
 Job 16. 22.

10. The Scripture runs all upon Nows, and upon the present, as to this great work. Acquaint now thyself with him, &c. Therefore also now faith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, &c. and, Return ye now every one from his evil way. God does not onely command the duty, and makes it every man's duty, but prescribes also the time, that it be now, that it be forthwith, without any further delay. But now
 commanderh

Job 22. 21.
 Joel 2. 12.
 Jer. 18. 11.

commandeth all men every where to repent : and, Act. 17. 30. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return, that is, presently : and, To day if ye will Jerem. 4. 1. *hear his voice, &c. See also Eccles 12. 1. Math. 5. 25. Isa. 21. 11, 12. &c.*

11. *The not doing what you are to do at present, as to this great work, makes Gods putting a price into your hand in vain, and to no purpose. Why ? because you do not imploy it, nor improve it, and so to what purpose is it ? it is all one as if you had none. Wherefore (says Solomon) is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it ?* Prov. 17. 16. *Now to repent and turn to God is your wisdom, and you have at present a price in your hand for to get it ; a price of time, strength, parts, gifts, means, and opportunities of grace, but to what purpose, seeing you have no heart to it, nor to improve the present price that is in your hand for to get it. Whereunto do opportunities and advantages of getting good serve, unless improv'd ? Say a man wanted some necessary commodity, that he could not be without, but must perish, if he get it not ; and not having wherewith to procure it, another should put a price into his hand : now to what purpose was this, if he be yet such a fool as not to lay it out, but perish with a price in his hand, had it not been better he had none ? To every thing there is a season, Eccles. 3. 1. and a time to every purpose under heaven ; and so for this, but what are any the near if they let it slip, and have no heart, as to what they should improve it for ? which is wisdom, saving conversion,*

version, and so salvation; and what should a man have an heart to, if not to these?

12. *The not hearkening to God, now at present while he calls, does much provoke his wrath, and aggravate your sins, and will augment your misery.* For who are we, that we should not presently stoop to, and obey, the call of so great a Majesty, especially in what is so much our own concern? *Because (says he) I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh, &c.* And this was the heavy aggravation of Jezebel's fornication, that God gave her space to repent, but she repented not: and so of those, who though not killed by former plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands: and Solomon tells us, that because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. But how is man's misery therefore great? is it not rather a mercy? yes, but his misery is therefore great, because he either is so blind that he cannot see it, or else so careless and negligent, that he lets it slip. For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snar'd in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them; they know not in this their day the things which belong unto their peace, at least not practically, nor savingly, so as to pursue them, till they are hid from their eyes, which
- Prov. 1. 24, 25,
26, 27, &c.
- Rev. 2. 21.
—9. 20.
- Eccles. 8. 6.
- 9. 12.
- Luk. 19. 41,
42, &c.

which is so sad, as that it made Jesus Christ himself to weep over *Jerusalem*; and the neglecting such opportunities given to sinners, for the good of their souls, will certainly be another day as a dagger at their hearts, when they shall see how wilfully and foolishly they have ruined their own precious souls, in delaying to make use of those helps they had, to have prevented it; and that they should be so strangely besotted, and as it were bewitched, not to look after that which so infinitely concern'd them, till it was too late. And therefore as you love your souls, and tender your salvation, delay no longer, but forthwith set upon the work, and dare not to go one step further in those dangerous ways, in which while you go on, hell is gaping for you, and utter destruction is ready to come upon you, yea and which, unless you turn from, you cannot escape. *O seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near: and, Give glory to the Lord, before he cause darkness, &c. — Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* Remember the watchman's answer, when he was enquired of, as concerning the night: *Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night, yea it hastens, and it will quickly come upon you, and therefore (says he) if ye will enquire, enquire ye, return, come, that is, do it speedily, least the night surprize you: O to day, and while it is called to day (as the holy Ghost saith) hearken to his voice, else know, if you shall*

Cum nihil morte certius, ac horâ inortis incertius, quomodo quis audebit, sciens ac volens in tanto remanere periculo, per quod incurrere potest æternam pœnam. &c. Gerb.

If. 55. 6.

Jer. 13. 16.

2 Cor. 6. 2.

If. 21. 11, 12.

Acts 11. 18.
 2 Tim. 2. 25.
 &c.
 Ezek. 33. 18.
 Zach. 1. 3. &c.

shall still despise the grace and mercy of God inviting you to repent, you will be sure to find, and feel too, his power in punishing you, for refusing to repent. Thus though you cannot convert your selves, nor of your selves turn again to God, yet there are several things you see, which you may, yea and ought, for to do, as in reference to this turn, and which if you do not do, you will be found wholly without excuse, and self-destroyers, and your blood will be upon your own heads, because you did not do what you might. For you must not think God should do all, and you do nothing; hence in Scripture conversion is spoken of, not onely as God's work, as most truly and properly it is, but in some sense as man's, he really endeavouring it, and making use of all ways and means prescribed to further it; not that we can turn our selves, but that we to our utmost use the best means, and take the most effectual course, for to do, that in some sense we may be said to do. And thus, though the work of conversion be properly God's work, yet, as one well observes, it is sometimes ascribed to our selves, that we should not be negligent; sometimes to Ministers and instruments, to shew we must not contemn their help; and sometimes to God, that we may not be self-confident, or unthankful. And the great reason indeed why sinners do not repent, nor turn from their sins to God, is not because they cannot (though they cannot) but because they will not: for they think they can, and yet will not, nay they will not try whi-
 ther

ther they can or no, nor use the power which God hath given them; they can do more than they do, but will not do it; they are slothful and negligent, and will not set themselves to use all the means they might; and besides, they are content with their Cannots, and therefore they may thank themselves that they perish, and do not repent nor turn to God. But for farther satisfaction as to this great point, I shall refer the Reader to that excellent Tract of *Mr. William Fenner*, called, *Wilful impeniency the greatest self-murder*, and shall here answer an objection that may arise in our way, viz. this, that if we cannot convert our selves, nor turn again to the Lord, why are we then so often called upon, and exhorted to this, as if it was in our power? To this I answer: 1. It is true indeed, we cannot turn our selves, no, we may as soon create a world as do it, the work of Conversion is a greater work than the work of Creation, and man that cannot so much as make one hair of his head black or white, nor adde one cubit to his stature, nor do the less, how should he do the greater? And therefore for any to interpret those Texts, that call upon man to turn to God, as if it was in man's power to convert himself, as the Papists, *Arminians*, and some others do, it is to misinterpret and pervert the true sense and meaning of them. But 2. though we cannot convert our selves, yet that we are so often exhorted, and called upon to do that which is not in our power to do, viz. to turn to God, it is not in vain.

For 1. *these mind us and shew us our duty,*

NOT

A præcepto ad
posse, non va-
let consequen-
tia, sed docet
quid fieri de-
beat, &c.

Si in manu no-
stra positum
esset, quicquid
Deus requirit,
supervacua es-
set, gratia Spi-
ritus sancti.

not our ability, what we are, and ought to do, not what we are able to do; what must be done, not what we can do; they are a measure not of our power, but point out to us our duty, which we once had ability to, but wilfully depriv'd our selves of; but that does not hinder, but that God may yet require his own.

2. *They are to convince us of our impotency and inability, that so in, and under the sense thereof, we might be humbled and laid low, and look out for ability and help elsewhere; which had we of our selves, the grace of the Spirit would be in vain, and of no use.*

3. Though we cannot convert our selves, yet these exhortations, calls, and commands, are not in vain, for *God many times works in them, and by them, and makes them effectual as to the work,* as to turn sinners again; they are ways and instruments, in and by which the Spirit putteth forth his power, and comes into the heart. As when God at first said, *Let there be light, there was light,* and when Christ said to *Lazarus, come forth, he came forth;* thus God many times by his Spirit, and grace, and the secret virtue and power thereof is pleased so effectually to operate in and by those means, as to make them effectual as to that great work: so that while a man speaks to the ear, he many times speaks to the heart, and does so accompany what is spoken, with his own power, as to make it the power of God to conversion and salvation; as while *Peter spake, the holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word,* and as *Paul* was

was preaching, and Lydia hearing, the Lord opened her heart. Thus such as are dead, attending on the means of life, come to be quickened, and live, according to that, *Hear, and your soul shall live, &c.* and God in speaking, does at once both direct what to do, as also inable for to do it, calls and converts, counsels and makes to obey, and comply, &c. says, *turn*, and he *turns*, and *be converted*, and *converts*.

4. Though we cannot convert our selves, yet there are *several things, as you have heard, that we may do*, as in reference to conversion; for God does not exhort, nor call upon men as a company of stocks and stones, but as such as are capable of the use of such means, and directions, which he gives them.

Deus jubet
quæ non pos-
sumus, ut nove-
rimus quid ab
eo petere debe-
amus. Aug.

5. If we understand these places of those al- ready turned and converted, they may coope- rate in further turning, though they cannot at first turn themselves; not begin it, yet being be- gun, they may and ought to carry it on. A su- pernatural life being infused into the soul, we may spiritually move, and being first acted and wrought upon by God, we may further act, and work upon our selves.

Acti agimus,
& hoc bene
agimus, quod
a bono agi-
mur.

6. Though we cannot convert our selves, yet if we seek to the Lord, he is both able, and also ready and willing for to help us, he is God all-sufficient as in and to himself; so at all times, and in all things, as to others, as he said to *Pau'*, *his grace is sufficient for us*, his accepting, free, and favouring grace, as I said before, against our unworthiness, and his powerful operating grace

against

Prov. 1. 23.

against our weakness, and his strength is made perfect in weakness, and he is very ready to put it forth. Turn you at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, &c. What he commands in one place, he makes promise of in another.

CHAP. XII.

Motives to turn to God.

IN need to adde further motives here might seem needless, there being so much in the words themselves to move us to this, it being (as ye have heard, and had it abundantly confirm'd) the onely way for a people to be sav'd, and that in the largest sense, and utmost extent thereof: but that I may the more yet prevail, as to that wherein we are all so infinitely concern'd, both as to our own and the Nations weal, I shall propound to your serious consideration these following motives.

1. *The equity and reasonableness thereof,* how just, and right, and meet, and equal a thing it is, that we should turn again to God, as *Elihu* bespeaks *Job*, Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Surely, having by departing from God and his ways, done so great wrong and injury both to God and

and our selves, what can be more meet, and matter of greater equity, than that we should break off, and amend, and not go on still to pervert our ways as we have done, especially his chastening hand being upon us. See how the Lord argues, as to the equity and reasonableness of this, in that famous place, *Jer. 8. 4.* *Moreover thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord, shall they fall, and not arise, shall he turn away, and not return?* In the three first verses of this chapter, we have grievous judgments denounced against the Jews, both dead and alive: such as were dead, though great ones, should not be suffered to lie quietly in their graves. *At that time saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the Kings of Judah, and the bones of the Princes, &c.* and, *death shall be chosen rather than life, by all the residue of them that remain, &c.* And now the Lord the more to manifest the equity of his proceedings in this severity towards them, declares the folly and unreasonableness of their proceedings, running on headlong without stop or stay, in those ways that tended to their utter ruin and destruction; and the Lord reasons the case with them, *Thus saith the Lord, shall they fall and not arise, shall he turn away and not return?* Is there any man so absurd, so witless, so void of sense and reason, who being fallen will not willingly arise, or at least assay to get up, and be glad of such as would offer him their help? or that having gone astray, would not gladly come again into the right way? A man may indeed unawares, and through inadvertency,

Jer. 3. 1.

v. 3.

v. 4.

cy, miss his way and go astray, yea but will he not desire to come into his way again, and be willing and glad to receive direction from those who would set him therein? and why then do not this people do so? why, having fallen by their sin, do they refuse to arise, or to be raised again, by those that take pains with them to that purpose? and why, having wandred and gone out of the right way, do they go on still pertinaciously in the same, refusing to return or to be reduc'd? why does this people thus act? even quite contrary to the usual way and manner of men in such a case. Thus the Lord makes application of this to the people, *Why then is this people slidden back by a perpetual back-sliding?* why, having gone out of the right way, and being in a wrong way, so prejudicial to themselves, will they thus still persist in it? *they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return, I have kn'd and heard;* this shews God's earnest desire of their repentance, being a phrase borrowed from men, who are wont diligently to listen after what they much desire to hear; *but they spake not aright, no nor acted aright,* for it follows, *no man repented him of his wickedness, saying what have I done?* they, it may be, complain'd what others had done or did, *but none said what have I done?* everyone turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battel, that is, fiercely, fearlessly, presumptuously, neither regarding their duty, nor danger, neither my command, nor their own safety. Thus in stead of turning from evil, they still run headlong, and with an impetuous

v. 5.

v. 6.

impetuous eagerness into evil, and will not be curb'd nor restrain'd, but will on. And how unrighteous and unreasonable, and against all equity is this? and hence wicked men are called unreasonable men, *2 Thes. 3. 2.* And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, who still go in their sins without remorse, and refuse to return. And if sinners will not see the equity of this now, of turning again to God, so as to return, they shall so see and feel the iniquity of it hereafter, as to fill them with shame and astonishment. O that they should be so sottish, so absurd and unreasonable, as being fallen not to arise, as being out of the way not to turn into it again! The sottishness and unreasonableness of this is such, and so great, that the Lord in the very next verse, calls the very unreasonable creatures to witness against it, and in panels as it were a Jury of Storks, and Turtles, and Cranes, and Swallows to condemn it. *See the Stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow, observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.* The brute creatures do by a natural instinct, know and betake themselves to what is for their good, and safety, but my people (for so they will needs be called) know not the judgment of the Lord, that is, they heed it not, at least so as to practice what the Lord out of his Word hath prescribed them for their good and safety; or they do not perceive, though by all marks and tokens they might, what the Lord intends to bring upon them

Ab irrationabilibus auget accosationem, etenim norunt volucres varietatem temporum, & nunc huc, nunc illuc transvolantes, reperiunt naturā quæ sunt usui, &c. Theoderet.

them, or at least not so, as by repentance to prevent it. Those brute creatures indeed, the *Stork*, and the *Turtle*, &c. they, when sharp weather is coming, avoid it by flying where it is warmer; but my people they will persist, and go on as they did, and rather dye and perish, than alter their course, and get into a better state, get under the warm and comfortable beams of my favour; so that this people act in a Sphere, and at a rate below Brutes; they were made above them, but they make themselves inferiour to them; God hath put them under their feet, and they set them as judges above their heads. O how wofully is man degenerate, how wonderfully! even reasonless creatures act more reasonably than they; for they when the season grows sharp, and the weather cold and stormy, knowing if they abide where they are, they are like to starve and perish with cold and hunger, they change their quarters, and fly to some milder and warmer Region; but this people are so foolish and senseless, that whatever storms of wrath and divine vengeance hang over them, as ready to fall upon them, and overwhelm them, yet will not they change their minds, nor manners, nor mend their ways nor works, but continue the same they were, and go on to do as they did, say I, or do I what I will. And hence says the Lord, *how do ye say we are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us? Piscator reads it, how dare you?* as if the Lord had said, with what face can ye say, we are wise? you wise? away for shame, say not so, do not you talk of wisdom

Quomodo dicere audentis; Sapientes sumus, &c.

wisdom, who act below *Storks* and *Turtles*, &c. that have not so much wit nor forecast as they, but are more unreasonable and senseless than those reasonless creatures: you wise, when the very fowls of the air are wiser than you? and you talk of the law of God, that act below the dictates of the law of nature? O with what shame and confusion of face for ever will this fill the faces of sinners another day, when they shall see and be forced to acknowledg, that though reasonable creatures, yet they acted not with that reason and equity, as the reasonless creatures did; yea the *Stork*, &c. We all apostatized and ran away from God in *Adam*, but in Baptism we gave up our selves to God again, we swore as it were fidelity to him, and yet we have gone again away from him; fled from our colours, and run into his and our enemies camp; and as nothing is more requisite, so is any thing more reasonable, or equal, than that we should turn back again unto him, our true Lord and Master? It was well said of her, not onely in point of commodity, but in point of equity, not onely as being profitable, but as being right and reasonable. *I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.* So of the Prodigal, *Luk. 15. 18. I will arise and go to my father, &c.* O we can never do what is just, and right; and equal, and reasonable; unless we do this, turn unto God again. Hence this is called *man's uprightness*, or *man's equity*; — *To shew unto man his uprightness.* The Hebrew is, *his rectitude*, or

Hos. 2. 7...
Hebr. ישר
rectitudinem
ejus, i. e. resipiscen-
tiam.
Rectum enim
est, ut homo de
peccatis suis
admonitus,
præsertim à
Deo resipiscat.
Pisc.
Job 33. 23.

rightness, which *Piscator* retains, as that he judges best; understanding by this rightness of man, his repentance, it being most right, just, and equal, that man being admonished, and that by God himself of his sins, should repent and turn to him.

2. *The excellency and honourableness thereof.* 1. In its own nature, it being a *grace*, a Gospel-saving grace, and all grace is excellent. 2. In its Author, *it being of God*, his work, his gift. 3. In its rise, and root, which is that *precious grace of faith*. 4. In regard of the object, and that both turn'd from, and turn'd to: for in repentance we turn from *darkness*, and turn to *light*; from *sin and Satan*, and turn to *God*, hence call'd *repentance towards God*, or as *Beza* renders it, *conversion to God*: and such a God, a great God, and a great King above all Gods, the living and true God, the blessed and onely potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, upon whose head are many Crowns, the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; the God of glory, who is clothed with honour and majesty, whose name alone is excellent, and is to be praised from the rising of the Sun, to the going down of the same; yea whose glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. Behold the Nations are as a drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the Ballance; yea they are all before him as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing

Conversionem
ad Deum. Be-
za. Acts 20. 21
Psal 95. 3.
1 Tim. 6. 15.

Gen. 14. 19,
20.

Pf. 113. 3.

Neh. 9. 5.

Dan. 7. 10.

Sovereign way of being saved.

243

nothing and vanity. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. And to such a God it is that we turn, when we do indeed turn again, the remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob to the mighty God. O Israel, return to the Lord thy God, &c. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, turn ye unto me, &c. And we preach unto you (says the Apostle) that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth, &c. And it is said of the Thessalonians, that they turned from Idols, to serve the living and true God. And, I will arise, says the Prodigal, and go to my father, and what a noble, generous, and excellent thing is that whereby we do this. Turn from sin and Satan to God, and such a God, and our God and heavenly father; turn from misery to our felicity, from the great and onely true evil, to the chief good; from darkness to light, from death to life, from earth, yea from hell, to heaven, from swine and husks to bread enough in our fathers house, from feeding on ashes to feed on Angels food, heavenly viands; from among murderers to the God of mercies, from the crooked vile ways of sin to the even and excellent ways of holiness, from ways of danger to ways of safety, of trouble, to ways of peace, of bitterness, to ways of pleasantness, of wasting and destruction to ways of wealth and salvation; from broken cisterns that can hold no water, to springs of water, yea to the fountain of living waters; from a wilderness, and a land of deserts, drought, and the shadow of death,

If. 40. 15, 16,

17.

—10. 21.

Hof. 14. 1.

Zach. 1. 3.

Acts 14. 15.

1 Thes. 1. 9.

Luk. 15. 18.

Pœnitentia dicitur conversio ad Deum, inter quem & nos diffidium faciunt peccata. Tossan.

Ἡ ματάνοια δὲ
ἐκ τῆ παραφύ-
σιν, εἰς τὸ κατὰ
φύσιν· καὶ
ἀπὸ τοῦ Δια-
βόλου πρὸς τὸν
Θεὸν ἐπαίνος.
Damasc.

death, to a fruitful refreshing Paradise. In a word, from sin, which hath in it nothing but guilt, and filth, and stain, and torment, and curse, and death, and condemnation, to God, who is the sole and sovereign spring and fountain of all good, of light, life, happiness, help, comfort, consolation, salvation: and not onely how equal, but how excellent is this? yea, and this makes it not onely our duty, but highest dignity to turn again, it being to God, and such a God; from what is most vile, to an object so infinitely worthy. It is best of all indeed not to sin, but next to repent, and turn from sin to God, who is such a God the most high, and most excellent: — *they called them to the most high.*

Justin. Mart-
tyr.
Hof. 11. 7.

Rom. 6. 1, 2.

5. In its fruits and effects, and in its end and issue. What excellent things are those the Apostle reckons up, as following upon conversion? What fruit (says he) had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end everlasting life. O what a blessed change, and what an excellent turn is here? before servants of sin, now servants of God; before fruit unto unrighteousness, now unto holiness; before, the end, death, now everlasting life. 1. Here's the excellentest freedom, to be made free from sin. 2. The excellentest service, to become servants to God. 3. The excellentest fruit, fruit unto holiness: and 4. the excellentest end, and that is everlasting life. O there is not nobler service performed,

med, excellenter fruit growing, nor a happier end to be attained, in heaven it self. And this follows upon our being turn'd again, which makes at once the sinner happy, heaven merry, hell sorry, the Devils sad, Angels glad, the Saints to rejoyce on earth, yea and all those celestial Heroes in Heaven ; and how excellent must that needs be, that does all this ? and therefore to its difficulty oppose its excellency, and excellent things are difficult, but much to be preferr'd before things that are easie, but base, and vile. *Job* ^{τὸ καλὸν ῥᾶν} ^{λεπτὸν} — Faci-
 speaking of such as were base, and acted vile ^{lis descensus ad}
 things, he tells us *they had no helper*, or as the ^{orcum.}
Dutch, *they needed no helper*, that is, to execute their vile intentions : no, the work was easie enough, they could do it of themselves, but it was base, vile, mischievous, destructive work. *Job* 30. 13.
 But now to repent, and turn to God, and honour him, and do good, is hard and difficult ; here we need helpers, help both from God and man : but how infinitely is the one with all its difficulty, to be preferr'd before the other with all its facility ? It is a thousand times more eligible to be labouring for Diamonds, than lazing in the dirt ; to be sweating in a Golden Mine, than idling and at ease in the mire ; to be toyling for treasures, than toyling for straws ; better is the *straight gate* and *narrow way* that leads to life, than the *wide gate* and *broad way*, that leads to death.

3. *The utility thereof*, the profit, benefit, and commodities that accrew to the sinner thereby ; and these are so many as cannot be enumerated, ^{Veræ & salutari}
 and ^{ris pœnitentiæ}
^{fructus multi-}
^{ple. &c. Gerh.}

Clavis visce-
rum Dei.

Zach. 1. 3.

and so great as cannot be commensurated, so that if any should ask; what advantage then hath he that turns to God? or what profit is there of Repentance? I must answer as the Apostle *Paul* does in another case, *much every way*. And when a soul turns again indeed to God, it may be said, as *Leah* said when *Gad* was born, *A troop, or company cometh*. O how many mercies blessings, and benefits, come and throng in then upon the convert? To turn from sin it is (says one) a key to unlock all the chests of God's mercies, and a preservative against all miseries. How many mercies are heaped up together, in *Hos. 6. 1. 2. Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind up. After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Here's healing and binding up, and reviving and raising, and then living in God's sight: and v. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth: that is, we shall experimentally know, and tast, and see, that the Lord is gracious, and he in his gracious accesses to our souls will be the same to them, as the Sun, and the former and latter rain are to the earth. And how comfortable, profitable, refreshing, and reviving are these? And, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you: and how much is wrapped up in that expression, turn unto you? that is, mercifully,*

mercifully, favourably, graciously, turn my pleasant face to you, lift up the light of my countenance upon you, vouchsafe you my special grace and favour, be reconcil'd to you, and at peace with you, I will pardon you, bless you, do good to you, multiply all blessings upon you, and remove all evils and plagues from you, yea turn all into good unto you, so that you shall find and feel, and abundantly experience, the sweet fruits, and blessed effects of my turning to you. Thus, when God turns to us, all good turns, he being the fountain thereof; heaven and earth turn, happiness turns, the creature turns, the Angels turn, the Gospel, and all the glory, and promises, and priviledges thereof, yea a full and overflowing all-sufficiency of all good turn to us, and all evil turns from us, all that is evil indeed; for afflictions, if they abide with us, they are turn'd into good, yea all now work together for good to us. So that amidst ayles we are now without evil, and amidst harms without hurt, and *though six and seven troubles throng us, not any the least evil toucheth us, but all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.* Thus when we turn to God with a holy turn, God turns to us with a gracious turn; and when God turns to us, all good is afloat towards us, and all evil is ebbing and hastening from us, & all in heaven and earth will become turned for our good. *Deut. 30. 3.* The Lord tells Israel, that if they shall return to the Lord their God, then *the Lord their God will turn their captivity, and have compassion on them, and will*

Job 5. 19.

Ps. 25. 10.

return, &c. But let me a little more particularly and distinctly hold forth some of the benefits of this turn.

Acts 3. 26.
in conversione,
re, si vos con-
vertēitis, &c.
So Syriack and
Arabick. &c.

1. *This is the great blessing of the Gospel,* even the blessing that Jesus Christ himself, being raised up, and exalted by his father, is sent to bless with, in the preaching and dispensing thereof. *Unto you first, God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* Some indeed read it, *if you turn,* or every one of you turning, &c. and so make being blest, an argument and motive to turn. And this is a true and a good sense, that when we turn away from our iniquities, though not by any strength of our own, that then Jesus Christ will bless us. But first Jesus Christ must bless us in turning us, before he bless us being turn'd; and therefore others render it, as here, *in turning you,* as declaring the way and manner how Christ blesses, and this agrees well with the word *blest*; for iniquity being that alone which brings the curse, the onely way to be blest must needs be to be turned from it: and while people are not turned from their sins, but still go on impenitently in them, they cannot be blest. Thus conversion is the great Gospel-blessing, and the way to be further, yea for ever blest; and it prevents the curse, which else we cannot evade. *And he shall turn the heart of the fathers, &c. Least I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

3. 2. 4. 6.

2. *Upon this follows that great, and glorious, and inestimable mercy and priviledg of pardon,*
 that

that mercy of mercies which makes heaven, and the want of which makes hell, yea which if not enjoy'd, every thing else (as one expresses it) even our very boards and beds, and fields, and houses, are but as an hell to us. *David* having been for a while under the sense of God's displeasure, for his sins, but feeling at length the Sun-shine of God's favour breaking forth through the clouds upon him in this mercy, O how joyfully does he break out! and how admirably does he speak of the blessedness of those who partake of so great a mercy, of so glorious a priviledg! *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*, that is, by the Lord; for man must not cover it, but acknowledge it. *Blessed is the man, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, &c.* Blessed, or, as others, O blessed, O happy, or O the blessednesses, or O welfares the man! it is a joyful acclamation for such a man's felicity. *Dutch* read it, *right happy*, or *happy indeed*, he is so indeed *whose transgression is forgiven, &c.* We have here in several words the same benefit repeated, because of the greatness of it; and though here is *Antology*, yet not *Tautology*: for these several Metaphorical expressions are wonderfully comfortable. 1. *Sin is a burden*, and the first word signifies an easing, or taking away, and blessed is he that is eased of such a burden. 2. *Sin is most loathsome*, and filthy in the sight of God, and he is of purer eyes than that he can behold or look on it, but with utter detestation and abhorrence, and the second word notes a covering of it,

Pl. 32. 1, 2.

it, and ~~putting~~ putting it out of his sight; contrary to that, *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.* To set us, our selves there, is our happiness; but to set our sins there, is our woe and misery, and there cannot be a greater: *And cover not their iniquity, &c.* 3. Sin is a debt, and the third notes a not imputing or reckoning it; and what a blessed thing is pardon, that does all this? does sin trouble as a burden, pardon eases, and takes it off? as loathsome, pardon covers it; as a debt, pardon does not impute it; and this follows upon repentance: this priviledg of remission, upon the grace of conversion, not as the cause of it, but as the way and order in which God will have it to be had. And hence we find them joyned together *Luke 24. 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, &c.* *Acts 5. 3. — To give repentance to Israel; and forgiveness of sin, &c.* — And be converted, and I should heal them. *Mark* has it, *c. 4. v. 12. And their sins should be forgiven them,* which is the souls healing. That's a full place *Acts 3. 19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.* The former of these words, *repent*, seems to import conviction and contrition; the latter, conversion and amendment; one repentance of sin, or for sin, the other repentance from sin. And this is to repent indeed, to do both, to bewaile what we have committed, and not go on still to commit what we have bewail'd,

Neh. 4. 5.

Joh. 12. 40.

bewail'd: and what follows upon this? the blotting out of our sins; *that your sins may be blotted out*, that is, pardoned; our sins are in Scripture compared unto debts, and these are registred as it were in God's book, and there stand upon record; and now the Apostle tells them, that if they did repent, and were converted, these debts should be blotted out, God's book cross'd, all scores quit, and that hand-writing, which was against them, should be cancell'd; which is so choice a priviledg, and mercy of mercies, that this, if there was no more, might seem motive enough to put people upon repenting, and turning to God, *that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*. There are, by the way, times of refreshing or cooling, (as the Greek hath it) to come to the people of God, after the heat of their afflictions, and persecutions, here compar'd to fire. As *there remains a rest for the people of God*, so a time of cooling and refreshing; and who would not long for it, in such a dry scorching place, and weary land, as this world is? It is a figurative speech, and a fit Metaphor, especially as to the condition of those Regions which were so exceeding hot, and where workmen being even spent with heat, did retire into the cool shades for refreshing; and this refreshing comes from *the presence of the Lord*, that is, from his special gracious presence, or from his face, that is, the shines of his face, the bright beams of his favour, the light of his countenance, and whence

Deleta, non ut non sint, sed ut non impurentur, propter imputatam sponsoris nostri obedientiam.
Tossan.

Metaphora sumpta à creditoribus, qui debita, vel interveniente satisfactione, vel gratis remissa, delent.
ἡ ἀπαύρισις.

1 Pet. 4. 12.

else

else indeed should it come? that being the very
 spring and fountain of all refreshings, there they
 Psalm 16. 11. are, and thence they flow. *In his presence is
 fulness of joy, &c.* And this refers to the last
 day; for that day, which shall be a day of such
 heat and scorching unto others, shall be a day
 of cooling and refreshing to all such as repent
 and are converted, and that of far greater than
 of the coolest shade to the weariest workman,
 that is even spent and ready to faint for heat.
 But how is it said, that your sins may be blotted
 out then? are they not blotted out before?
 yes, the meaning thereof is, that then ye may
 find, and feel, and experience the comfort of
 their being blotted out; and while others sins
 stand still upon record, and therefore to
 be accounted for, the red lines of Christ's blood
 may then (as it were) be seen drawn over yours,
 the comfort of which at that day will be more
 than the possession of many worlds; and how-
 ever it will be the heat of the day to others, who
 yet persist and go on in their sins, this will make
 it the cool of the day to all such, and as the most
 refreshing shadow after heat, yea much more
 refreshing. And thus *Diodate* interprets it, *not*
 (says he) *that the remission of sins is put off till*
then, but because it shall then be publickly de-
clar'd, and bring forth its full effect of life and
glory; and they shall then be openly acquitted
 before Angels and men, and God shall not enter
 into judgment with them, but shew himself gra-
 cious and propitious to them. Many indeed
 read this latter clause otherwise, *viz.* and the
 times

Ut non veniat
 Deus vobis-
 cum in judi-
 cium, sed eum
 tunc propitium
 habeatis. *Toss:*

times of refreshing shall come, or that they may come, and so make it another motive to conversion; and when sinners do indeed repent, and turn to God, then and not till then is it, that times of refreshing do come to them from the presence of the Lord, their sins, which alone did interpose, being now remov'd. Others think it a defective kind of speech, and that something should be supplied, viz. that when those times of refreshing come, you also may be refreshed, you may share in them: as all that truly repent, and are converted are sure to do. 3. *Upon this follows divine favour*, which is better than life: then he is gracious to him, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face; and his life shall see the light, and —we shall live in his sight. But I do but mention this, because I have spoken of it before. 4. *Audience of prayer*: a great priviledg, a choice mercy. It is one of God's Attributes, that he is a God hearing prayer, O thou that hearest prayer, and such experience him as so. If (saith David) I regard iniquity in my heart, then indeed the Lord will not hear my prayer: no, he will never be a prayer-regarding God to a sin-regarding sinner; but when a sinner comes to hate sin in his heart, and abandon it in his life, then he will hear him, and accept him and his prayers. Now we know (said that man that was born blind) God heareth not sinners. Why? in some sense we are all sinners, we have sin, and are subject to sin, and so God should hear no man; but we are to understand it of such as are in a state

convenient, velut veniant. So the Syriack and Arabick; and others, as Luther, Camerarius. Illud est pro ut accipiunt, &c.

Elliptica oratio &c. ut cum venerint tempora refrigerii, vos sentiatis refrigerium, &c. Arcular.

Job 33. 24, 26, 28.

Hof. 6. 2.

Psal. 65. 2.
—66. 18.

Joh. 9. 31.

of

Prov. 15. 8.

—18. 9.

If. 1. 15

Prov. 1. 28.

2 Chron. 33.

12.

Jer. 31. 18.

If. 58. 9.

Pf. 34. 18.

Pf. 62. 17.

Nudatissimi.

Fun. Pisc.

העפר

of sin, as love, live, and lie in sin, and make a trade of sin, and go on in sin without remorse, and turning to God, and such God heareth not, but their very prayer is an abomination. *And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when you make many prayers I will not hear, your hands are full of blood; they shall call upon me, but I will not answer, &c.* But repenting sinners God hears; *Manasseh* was a great sinner, yet being greatly humbled, and becoming a convert, *he prayed, and God was intreated, and heard his supplication, &c.* So when *Ephraim* bemoaned himself, *I have surely (says the Lord) heard him, &c.* and, *Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am.* What wonderful condescension of the great God is here! as if he should say, what wouldst thou have? or what should I do? whatever it be, I am here ready to do it for thee, or to communicate it to thee. *The Lord is nigh to such as are of a broken heart, &c.* and, *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, &c.* yea such shall have audience, and acceptance, though never so mean and contemptible in the eyes of the world. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.* That which we render destitute, others read desolate; the Dutch, wholly stripped; *Piscator* and *Juni-um*, of the most naked, or of the poor shrub; the Hebrew word signifies such a shrub as stands alone in the wilderness, worthless, and unregarded,

ded, liable to every blast, and to be troden down by every beast; it comes of a word which signifies, *he was naked*, and the doubling of the two radical Letters imports the intension of the signification, as most naked, and most destitute, and stript quite bare of all help and comfort, and yet the prayers of such are not despised, but heard and regarded of God. *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, &c.* and what prayer or supplication soever be made, though never so weak, though but a sigh, and by any man that shall know the plague of his own heart: then hear thou in Heaven, &c. This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, &c. And this is, as I said, a choice mercy, a singular priviledg, and in this God much favours and honours a poor creature, and thus the Lord promises it, and thus the Saints speak of it. *I will set him on high, and how? he shall call upon me, and I will answer him: and, The Lord will hear when I call unto him, and I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, &c.* And hence it is said, *This shall be written for the generation to come, that God shall hear the prayer of the destitute, it shall be set down in a book, and recorded, and so published.* 5. Upon this follows a *fitness and aptness to receive the Word, and the impressions thereof*; for upon true conversion the *stony heart is taken away*, and there is given a *heart of flesh*, that is, a soft or tender heart, easily admitting or receiving the Word; it being like Wax to the Seal, and like

Of the much afflicted, or altogether destitute, and made naked of all help so the word imports.

Eorum qui sunt veluti myricæ. — humilésq; myricæ. Virg.

Is. 41. 17. I King. 8. 38, 39.

Pf. 34. 6.

—91. 14, 15.

—4. 3.

—116. 1.

—102. 18.

Ezek. 36. 26.

2 Chr. 34. 27.

Zach. 7. 11.

II. 26. 10.

— 1. 5.

Non credit, nec
cedit,

Joh. 8. 37.

like Gideon's fleece, drinking in the dew thereof; or like soft earth to the rain; whereas the hearts of such as are impenitent and unconverted, are as rocks, and steep stony places, which shoot off all without any impression. *Josiah* humbling himself, and his heart being tender, what an impression had the words of the Law upon his heart? the hearts of such open, and the Word goes in, and there it comes to be ingrafted, which is a choice mercy; whereas the contrary is the greatest judgment, as a stony heart, an hard heart, and such is every impenitent heart, it receives no impression of God's Word nor works, it yeilds neither to precepts nor promises, nor threatnings nor admonitions, nor reprehensions nor persuasions, neither to judgments nor mercies. *But they refused to hearken, &c. Let favour be shewn to the wicked, yet will not he learn righteousness, and why should ye be stricken any more? &c. The natural man receives not the things of God,* he neither believes them, nor yeilds to them. There may be some slight superficial reception for a little while, as is said of the stony ground, but it is not solid nor deep, so as to enter, root, and abide. The Word may have place among them, but it has not (as Christ told the Scribes and Pharisees) *place within them*, and therefore they sought to kill him: That which is observ'd in Printing, is very applicable and considerable here, *viz.* that the Paper which is to be printed upon, is not of it self, as it is dry, and stiff, and stubborn, fit to receive impression; and therefore to render it fit, it is several

several times drawn through the water, and so being thoroughly moisten'd, mellowed, and made soft, it becomes fit: and truly so it is with our hearts, as they are by nature, and of themselves, and much more by custom in sin, they are hard and stiff, and stubborn, very unfit to receive any impression of God's truth; but being drawn as it were through the waters of repentance, and so mellowed, and made soft, and tender, they become fit. Thus the repenting *Corinthians* became Christ's Epistle, for their hearts being made tender, the Gospel was writ upon them with ease; and so the hearts of the *Romans* were cast into the Word as into a Mould, bearing the stamp and figure of it. Solomon says, *A reproof enters more into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool*; his heart opens, and yeilds to reproof. Salt enters not into a Stone, but it does into flesh, and seasons it, and makes it savoury; and so do reproofs, which are as Salt unto hearts of flesh; such sit down as it were at God's feet, and hear his words, and they are willing and pliable, and their language is, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth, &c.* 6. Upon this follows inheritance among them which are sanctified. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance, &c. What an excellent thing is repentance here describ'd to be, an opening of the eyes, and a turning (as you have heard) the sinner from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan

2 Cor. 3. 3.

Rom. 6. 17.

Prov. 17. 10.

Acts 26. 18.

- unto God, and then what inestimable benefits do follow thereupon? not onely forgiveness of sin, as you have heard, but *inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ*, that is, a lot in the heavenly inheritance, in that inheritance of the *Saints in light*, which now they are made meet for, *being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear son, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserv'd in heaven*, of which such glorious things are spoken; which is of God's own preparing, Christ's purchasing, and that by no less price than his blood, which has the *glory of God*, and where not onely Angels but God himself dwels, and resides for ever: and into this all true converts have entrance ministred unto them, but no other shall or can, but are without. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, &c. The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools.* And thus some interpret that in the *Acts*, 3. 19. *That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*, that is, that your sins being blotted out or forgiven, you may be received into heaven to partake of those eternal joys, &c. And hence true repentance is said to be *repentance unto life, and repentance unto salvation*, and therefore *not to be repented of*; not as if it was the cause, or did in the least merit life or salvation, for *ipsa lachryma lachrymabiles sunt*, our very tears
- Col. 1. 12, 13.
- Psal. 24. 3, 4.
- Prov. 3. 35.
- Ut remissis peccatis vestris recipiamini in cœlum ad fruentum æternis gaudiis, &c.
Pisc.
- Acts 18. 18.
- 2 Cor. 7. 10.

tears need washing, and our repentance pardon, but as the end of it, and the way and means God hath appointed to lead to it. This is that Rainbow, which if God sees shining in our hearts, he will never drown our souls.

Non agit de causa salutis, sed eventu penitentiae, & ordinem ostendit, quod nimirum conversis donetur remissio, non securis, & impoenitentibus. Tossan, Psal. 4.6.

Thus you see what a profitable and gainful thing repentance is, and I have the longer stood upon this, because we are all for gain and profit. — *Who will shew us any good?* and shall we not then be for that, which tends to so much and so great gain and good, yea to all good, even the greatest. Art thou enquiring after good? *O he hath shewed thee here O man, what is good* Micah 7. 3. indeed, even that which the Lord requires of thee, viz. for to *repent and turn to him*, for Job 22. 21. thereby good shall certainly come unto thee. David prays, that God would *shew him a token for good*, and here's a token for Good indeed, when God turns thee again to himself for all good, for spiritual, and temporal, and eternal, for good every where here and hereafter, on earth and in heaven, below and above, in our way and at our journeys end, in our exile and in our own countrey, while we are abroad and when we come home to our fathers house; for godliness (which is the very essence of repentance) is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good, &c. And O that God would vouchsafe this token for good to England.

Micah 7. 3.

Job 22. 21.

Psal. 86. 17.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

Psal. 34. 13, 14.

Pl. 85. 9, 12.

Pro. 17. 20.
Perversus ani-
mo non conse-
quetur bonum.
Pro. 12. 21.

Pro. 13. 15.
Via prævari-
catorum aspe-
ra, duriter à
Deo excipiun-
tur, &c. Cart.

land, to this Nation, and to the whole of the Nation, to Court, and City, and Countrey, to every town, and fellowship, and family, yea to every house, and heart ! how would the Lord then give that which is good, and glory should dwell in our Land, and we should be exalted and brought into an happy state indeed ! but never let any expect good, or talk of gain, or profit, that still persist and go on in their sins, for such find no good, *he that hath a froward heart, findeth no good*, or a perverse heart, and that goes on still to pervert his ways, he finds no good, he shall be sure to find and feel evil enough, *be filled with mischief*, but finds no good, he may, goods, but no good, no true good nor gain, but such are all upon the losing hand, yea are all the greatest losers imaginable ; for such lose all true joy, peace, and comfort here, and Heaven, and happiness, and God himself for ever hereafter, yea their own souls, and *what is a man profited, should he gain a whole world, if he lose his own soul* ? Certainly then the sinners way and course, that yet persists and goes on in his sins, is the most unprofitable way and course under Heaven, — *The way of transgressors is hard*, or sharp, harsh, grievous, it may seem easie at present, but it will be sure to be found hard at last in the event, not onely not profitable, but pernicious, such shall be us'd hardly.

4. *The absolute and indispensable necessity thereof.* Our turning again to God is not a thing arbitrary, or indifferent, but indispensably necessary. Is to be blest by Christ necessary ? is pardon ?

pardon? is the favour of God? the shines of his face, the light of his countenance necessary? is to be happy? in a word, is heaven, is salvation, is eternal life, and *inheritance among them that are sanctified*, necessary? is, not to perish everlastingly necessary? and if these be not, what is? certainly and undoubtedly they are most necessary, and if so, then is it to repent and turn to God indispensably necessary; for without the one there is no attaining the other. There is a double necessity, 1. a necessity *in regard of God's command*, the great God enjoins it, and calls for it, and that frequently and earnestly; it may seem needless to mention places, there are so many every where obvious, and therefore there is onely one which I shall press and urge at present, and that is *Acts 17. 30, 31. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, &c.* Here's that which shews it indispensably necessary, God's command, and the majesty and greatness of that God who commands it. Is it good (says an Ancient) to repent, or not? why doubtest thou? God commands it, it is his will, &c. Such was the state of those former times, that God is said to *wink at them*, which may have a double interpretation, and both are well worthy our weighing and considering, 1. as denoting God's indulgence, he did not deal so severely with them sinning, but did patiently bear with them, as though he had known nothing, or was not angry,

1. Necessitas præcepti.

Dei præcipientis majestas.

Bonum est prænitere? an non? quid revolvis? Deus præcipit, &c. Tertull.

Ἰσορροπία, πατισινε.

angry, &c. because they had not those means and helps to keep them from sin, as others now in these knowing times, there being then much blindness, darkness, and ignorance ; yet not as if there were any such times as God wholly winked at, in point of justice, so as not to call them to account, but comparatively, he not so severely dealing with them as with knowing times, but never so as to let them wholly go unpunished, or not at all to call them to an account, for that was inconsistent with his providence and justice ; for though ignorance and darkness may indeed abate and lessen the measure and degree of sin, yet not totally excuse it. And what then are the sins of these knowing times, and days of so much clear light, as we live in ? how shall God wink at our sins, or how is it that he hath winked at them so long ? O the infiniteness of his patience, that he should bear with us so long, and not utterly consume us, who sin against more light and love than ever Nation did ! O when shall the riches of such goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, lead us to repentance ? But there is another sense and interpretation of these words, which some rather imbrace, as more fully laying open the meaning of the holy Ghost, and as most consonant to what follows, *And the times of this ignorance God winked at*, that is, he regarded not, he had little respect to them of those times, but let them go on in their sins, as it were without check, or controule, that is, he sent none among them to call and invite them to better, but suffer'd them

negligere LXX. usurpant pro indignari, &c.

walk in their own ways, and to go to hell in their Idolatries; God did not manifest his will to to them, as he did to the Jews, and thus the old Translation] has it, *God regarded not*, Dutch reads it, *overlooked*, or *disrespected*, lightly and slightly past them by, his eye was not upon them for good, so as to provide for them, and send amongst them those that should call and invite them to repentance, as he does now. The word is the same that is used Acts 6. 1. and it signifies to despise, neglect, look over, or besides, *because their widows were neglected*. So that to have an eye upon a place or person, it being to manifest kindness and respect, this winking seems to be opposed to favour rather than justice, viz. that God disregarded them, overlooking them, or besides them, and not at them in mercy. And *de Dieu*, upon the place, shews, that it signifies God's anger and displeasure against them, and therefore hid the means of salvation from them: so that here not onely is God's command of repentance made known, but the goodness of God in pressing the same, &c. And truly it is very sad in this sense, for God to look over, or look besides a place or people, not so to regard times, and shew that care of them and respect towards them, as to send those amongst them that should call and invite them to repentance. But *England* has nothing to charge God with, as to this; if this be to manifest respect to a people, never had Nation clearer nor fuller demonstration thereof then we have had. And this sense and interpretation of the words does best agree

Psal. 33. 18.

—34. 15.

with the sequel, *but now commandeth all men every where to repent*, and therein manifests more grace and favour; he does not now leave nor let men alone to go on in their sins, and *walk in their own ways*, as formerly, but many are now sent forth to call and invite them to repentance, to reclaim sinners, and to reduce wandering prodigals, crying, *Turn ye, turn ye, and return, return.* Repentance and remission of sins is now preached in Christ's name, and many shew here and there, and where ever they come, *that men should repent and turn to God, &c.* So that now the great God does not onely command *all men every where to repent*, but the holy Ghost specifies it here as a choice mercy, and singular favour and priviledg, that he does so, and that beyond what he vouchsafed to former ages, *and the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent*, and truly, next to true repentance, and saving conversion it self, this is the choicest mercy, and greatest and highest priviledg, that God can be-trust a place or people with, and this is the clearest and amplest demonstration of God's regard and respect to times that he can give, for God to send his messengers up and down, here and there, in his name, to command, and invite, and call upon people to repent, and turn to God, to cry as those Prophets of old, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings, &c.* and, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye dy?* and as that blessed Martyr, *Repent O England, repent,*

repent, repent: this is the fruit of God's compassion on a people, and in this the tender mercy of God, yea the very bowels of his mercy do break forth, and display themselves; and to despise and reject such mercy, to kick against such bowels, causes the wrath of the Lord to arise against a people, till there is no remedy, for if, says Christ, I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, that is, in comparison, their sin had not been so grievous as now it is, but they might have had some excuse, because of their ignorance, but now they have no cloak or pretence for their sin. Thus that the great and most high God commands us to repent, not only should his sovereign authority therein awe us, and have a strong influence upon us to obey, but the regard and respect also which therein he manifests to us, and the care which he shews he has therein of our souls: and this is here subjoyned as one reason why he now commands all men every where to repent, v. 31. because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judg the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. There is a day of judgment set, a great and terrible day, in which God will judg the world, and he hath given assurance thereof to all men: and now God would have it well with men at that day, that they might be found then in peace, and that it might be a day of refreshing to them, and to that end he now commands them all every where to repent, and to turn to him, without

2 Chr. 36. 15.

Luk. 1. 77, 78, 79:

2 Chron. 36.

16, 17.

Joh. 15. 22.

without which he knows it will be a sad day to them, a day of perdition and destruction: and therefore is he still long-suffering towards us, not from slackness, but from a willingness that none of us *should perish*, but *that we should all come to repentance*, and so be saved. And what a great mercy, and singular kindness is it, that God has put us into a capacity of finding good by repentance, by giving his Son to shed his blood, and to lay down his life for our sins, without which all our repentance could have availed us nothing. And shall not now God's authority, nor clemency, his sovereignty, nor sweetness in commanding us to repent, prevail with us? but shall we despise both his greatness and his goodness, his Majesty and his mercy? what will this be, but after *our hardness and impenitent hearts to treasure up to our selves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* 2. There is a necessity, *as a way and means of our happiness and weal*, as that without which it cannot be but we must perish; and this Jesus Christ himself, who is *the Amen, the faithful and true witness*, yea truth it self, hath twice averred. *Luk, 13. 3, 5.* — *I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* And again, *I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* I tell you, who know full well who shall be saved, and came to save, that except you repent, you shall not be saved but perish; none indeed are saved for it, but for me and my merits sake, nor can any be saved without it. Had Jesus Christ shed

Rom. 2. 5.

2. Necessitas
medii.
Nisi agnitis
peccatis, seria
cordis contri-
tione pun-
gami, & vera fi-
de à deo irato
adeum propi-
tium & in filio
placatum con-
versi fueritis,
vitamq; emen-
daveritis, om-
nes simul peri-
bitis. *Winkel.*

shed Seas of blood, he would never yet save a sinner that he does not bring to repent of his sins. The Father and Son never agreed nor resolv'd upon saving man in an absolute illimited way, but in such a way and order, as in a way of repenting and believing, not as if there was any merit or causality in repentance, but as the way and condition, without which (though not the cause for which) remission of sins and salvation cannot be obtained. Thus Repentance is necessary, not onely as God's command, but also as a way & means and order, that God has ordained for remission and salvation; so that though there is no causality, dignity, or merit in our repentance, yet it is of that nature, that the holy Ghost must necessarily work it in all those who are partakers of them, so as to qualify for them; so that either we must repent or perish, turn or dye, be converted or destroyed; either this must be done, or we undone for ever. If indeed we repent, and turn from our transgressions, then the Lord hath told us, *iniquity shall not be our ruine*, though it tends to our ruine, but unless we repent, and turn, it will inevitably be so. If we still persist, and live, and lie in our sins, we shall then certainly *dye in our sins*, and perish in our sins. Hence says the Lord, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye dye O house of Israel*, implying, that 'till we do turn from our evil ways, we say in effect we will dye. *For the turning away of the simple shall slay them*, and, *he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death*. If thou warn the wicked, and

Quamvis Christus millies mortem obisset, nullus tamen impoenitens peccatorum condonationem ex illius morte consequetur, nec quemvis alium fructum percipiet. Deutus.

Aut poenitendum, aut perendum.

Ezek. 18. 30.

—33. 11.

Si divinæ miserationes nequeunt nos allestare, tum judica Deinos tercant.

Prov. 1. 31.

—11. 19.

be

- Ezek. 3. 19. *he turn not from his wickedness, he shall dye in his iniquity.* Either we must be turned to God here, or separated from him for ever hereafter; either be converted, or for ever excluded the Kingdom of Heaven, and turn'd into hell: *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, &c. ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* If therefore thou be backward in thoughts of repentance, be forward in thoughts of hell, &c. for we must turn, or for ever burn in hell. Thus conversion is necessary, as a means to life and happiness, so that as life is a necessary consequent of conversion, so death is an inevitable fruit and effect of the neglect of it; so that I may say to you, as Moses sometimes said to that people, *See I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil*: life and all manner of good, if you obey, and repent, and turn to the Lord; but death, and all manner of evil, if ye refuse; and *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life that ye may live.* Why? life and death are the greatest and forciblest arguments in the world: what will not a man give or do for life? *Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath, will he give for his life.* And death is the most formidable of evils, call'd the *King of terrors*: we use to say, such a man is as earnest and intent upon a thing, as if life and death depended upon it. Why truly life or death depend upon our turning or not turning to God, life and death are in these things, and accordingly such should our prayers, and cares, and
- Matth. 18. 2.
- Tertullian.
- Deut. 30. 15.

and indeavours be in and about the same.

5. *The gratefulness and acceptableness of it unto God*, how pleasing, welcom, and delightful it is to him, when a sinner does indeed repent and turn to God! O with what joy and singular complacency does the Lord speak of *Ephraim*, as turning from his Idolatries, and not going on as he had done to provoke him, and wrong himself. *Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols? I have heard him, and observ'd him*, and that with a great deal of joy and delight, as that I am glad of, and rejoyce in. So *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself*, &c. that is, bewailing his sins; the Hebrew is *hearing*, I have heard him, that is, attentively, pleasingly, delightfully, so as to take special notice of him, and to have a singular regard to him, and now *his bowels are troubled for him*, and *he will surely have mercy on him*. As God has a singular hatred and abhorrence of sin, so he cannot but be much pleased with repentance, by which the sinner turns from it to himself, from the chief evil to the chief good, and it being that wherein his own glory, and the sinners good is so much concern'd. For thereby God is honoured, Jesus Christ sees of the travel of his soul, and is satisfied, the Spirit ceases to be grieved as formerly, sin is pardoned, God's favour recover'd, Satan defeated, and the soul saved: how well was God pleased with *Josiah*, his heart being tender, and he *humbling himself before God*, which he twice mentions, as being much taken therewith? And so *Manasseh*, though

Hos. 14. 8.

Jer. 31. 18, 19.

Quemadmodum Deus summo odio habet peccatum, ita quoque summe hominis poenitentia delectatur, per quam à summo malo ad summum bonum convertitur.

Gerh.

2 Chr. 34. 27.

so great a sinner, yet repenting, what respect had God to him? yea so acceptable is this to God, that he had respect to it even in *Ahab*, so far as temporally to reward it, though hypocritical, the more to encourage to that which is true. And the acceptableness of this to God does further appear, by his earnest invitings to it, longings after it, waitings for it, bearing so long with sinners as in reference to it, his readiness to receive sinners upon the first discoveries of it, and pardoning the hainouest sins upon it. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise;* and what is a broken heart, but a penitent heart, an heart kindly melted, humbled, and in bitterness for sin, and this now is the *sacrifice of God*. 1. *Of God*, to denote its singular excellency, it being usual in the Hebrew to set out the excellency of a thing, by the addition of the name of God, as the *mountains and Cedars of God*, &c. 2. It is called the *sacrifices of God*, in the plural number, as denoting the peculiar gratefulness, and singular acceptableness of this above all other. There were many sacrifices under the Law, but none of them all so pleasing as this, nor any without this, this is the sacrifice of sacrifices, and this *God will not despise*. But is that all? no, there is more intended than spoken; the meaning is, Thou wilt highly esteem and account thereof, it is the most acceptable & endearedst frame under heaven, not onely above all sacrifices, but above all meer moral performances, and Pharisaical duties and perfections;

this

Psal. 51. 17.

זָבַח
אלהים
Sacrificia Dei.

It is a pains.

this made the poor Publican accepted, when the proud Pharisee was rejected. The spirit is the best of man, and a kindly broken spirit is the best of spirits, for such a spirit is ever a believing spirit: *they shall look upon Christ, &c.* Zach. 12. 10. there's faith; and *mourn for him*, there's repentance; and faith wonderfully pleases God, as highly honouring his Son, whom he so delights in, for it makes to him, and leans upon him, and clasps fast to him, as its peculiar object; it goes into the presence of God with him, and presents and urges him, and him alone and his righteousness, and satisfaction, for acceptation and propitiation of its sins, counting all *but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of him*, and this exceedingly pleases the father, that his Son so dear to him, should be thus honoured in the Souls having recourse to him, and relying on him, and such a soul seals to the truth of what the Word says, as concerning the greatness of God, the vileness of sin, and the excellency, usefulness, and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and the Lord cannot but have choice thoughts, and an high esteem of such a frame. *The heaven*, he says, *is his throne*, and *the earth is his footstool*, &c. but II. 66. 1, 2. *to him will he look that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at his Word*, that is, not only with a look of bare intuition, but dear affection, and gracious acceptation; yea such a one is the very home and habitation of God himself, though so high and holy. *For thus says the high and lofty one, that inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place,*

place, there's one of his dwellings ; *with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*, there's his other : It is not said, the Angels shall dwell with him, or grace, and peace, and joy onely , though these are sweet companions, but God himself , and where God dwels all good dwells, there dwels light, life, joy, peace, comfort, happiness, yea heaven it self , and how acceptable must he needs be to God, whom he thus honours.

6. *The comfortableness of it to our selves*, not onely to others, but to our own souls. It is very observable, that as the same word that signifies *iniquity*, signifies also *pain*, and sorrow, as occasioning the same, and as being that whereof comes trouble , grief, misery, and at last confusion ; and hence some render it *painful iniquity*, or *sorrowful sin* : so the same word in the Hebrew that signifies to repent, and mourn for sin, signifies also to comfort, and the reason may be this, because such repenting and mourning is the way to comfort, and true comfort arises out of it, and follows upon it. Worldly sorrow indeed, and joy, are contraries, but not godly, for these effect and help one the other : or 2. the reason may be, because there is joy even in such sorrow, and not onely does comfort follow it, but accompany it. The true penitent grieves for his sins, and rejoyceth for his grief ; certainly there is an hundred times more true comfort in the sorrow of a truly repenting sinner, than there is in all the mirth of a sinner, who yet goes

ו Iniquitas,
molestia, quæ
laborem & af-
flictionem pa-
rit.

ו dolu-
it, consolatio-
nem invenit.

Verus pœni-
tens de pecca-
tis dolet, & de
dolore gaudet.

on in his sins : how refreshing are *April* showers to the earth, and so and much more are true penitential tears to the soul, they do not only moisten and mellow the soul (as it were) for the reception of the word, but occasion mirth, Musick sounds sweetest upon the waters, and sweetest is that joy that accompanies such mourning. All true mirth is from a rectitude and right frame of the soul, from a being well set and dispos'd, as that word implies made use of by the Apostle *James* for being merry :

Is any merry? the *Greek* is, is any of a good or right mind? or well dispos'd? is he right set or hung, as we say? implying that all true mirth ariseth thence, and now, then and only then, that we repent and turn to God; are our minds and hearts right, and in a right frame or rightly hung or dispos'd. And therefore this must needs render our state comfortable indeed, when hearts are at rights, and ways at rights, and besides we are then turn'd to the God of all comfort, to the Sun of all refreshings, and the fountain of all consolations, and therefore can no more want comfort, than such as turn to the Sun light, or to the fountain water, or to the fire heat; and as such sorrow is accompanied with joy, so shall it be turn'd and end in joy, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*; that is, with a godly sorrow for sin; *they that sow in such tears shall be sure to reap in joy, and they who so go forth weeping bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.*

James 5. 13.
ευθυμεῖτε ἄλλήλοις ὡς ἑαυτοῖς ὡς ἑαυτοῖς ὡς ἑαυτοῖς
Æquo animo
est aliquis?

Matth. 5. 4.

Psal. 126. 3, 6.

T

And

Zeph. 3. 17.

Isal. 71. 21.

Isa. 61. 2, 3.

Job 38. 26.

Sec.

Isa. 65. 13.

Ecclef. 2. 2.

Psal. 50. 22.

Hos. 13. 8.

James 4. 9.

And then such have infinite cause, matter, and ground of joy, as being blest, as having Gods favour, pardon of sin, audience of prayer, inheritance among them that are sanctified, &c. yea over such God himself rejoiceth with joy, yea rests in his love, and joyes over them with singing, and shall comfort them on every side. Such Jesus Christ himself was anointed to comfort, and to them belong the promises of comfort, and what cause and ground then have such to rejoice, and again to rejoice, yea to shout for joy; but till sinners repent, and turn to God, they have nothing to do with joy, neither have they any true cause or ground for it, but we may well say of their laughter, *it is mad, and of their mirth what doth it*: such rejoice? as are in a state of perdition, and in the very gall of bitterness? and whose portion, in the state they are in, is nothing but wrath, and death, and woes, and curses, and horrors, and terrors, and tearings a pieces, rolling garments in blood, and renting the caul of the heart, and devouring like a Lion. And sinners not being sensible of this at present, does but aggravate their misery, and make their condition the more lamentable, and is here any ground for mirth? and not rather of grief and continual sorrow of heart; and well may we say to such as the Apostle James, *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, let your laughter be turn'd to mourning, and your joy to heaviness*. And though in a right way and upon good grounds, we wish and desire comfort to all, yet as to the state that many

many are at present in, we cannot wish them better than trouble, as the way to peace, and grief, as the way to joy; as Bernard, once writing to one that he thought not sollicitous enough about the judgments of God, wished him much fear. *Rejoyce not* (says God to Israel) *as other people, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, &c.* And however such may at present find pleasure and delight in sin, and carnal mirth in their evil ways, yet let them know this is but their disease, and from the distemper that is upon their souls: for were their hearts right, they would cry out of the bitterness of what they now say is sweet, and what pleasures are they but such as are common with beasts, and of the brutish part, and but for a moment, and such as have a poysonous sting in them, and death and damnation entail'd to them, and such as will certainly end in bitterness, if not mercifully here, dreadfully and eternally in hell hereafter; and therefore be no longer enemies to your own comfort, in going on still in your sins, but turn to the Lord, and then you shall experience true joy and comfort indeed, and shall not lose your joys nor pleasures, but change them for better, for spiritual, heavenly, and more refined. Would you not all now have joy, and comfort, and be glad? which indeed is the very strength and support of our spirits. and life of our lives, for what is life or any thing else without comfort, this being, as one well expresses it, the Spring of our year, the light of our day, the Sun in our firmament; *for the joy of the Lord is your*

Timorem plurimum.

Hos. 9. 16

strength, and a merry heart does good like a medicine, yea such a one hath a continual feast, and would you have so? O then turn to God; we who are Ministers are called helpers of others joy, and we would be glad to be so, but never can we be so indeed, till we become helpers of your conversion, and instrumental in bringing you to God, and turning you to him, and then, and not 'till then, do we become helpers of your joy indeed, yea and of our own too in yours, and then may we say, Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, &c. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare, but the righteous doth sing and rejoyce.

Ecclef. 9. 7.

Prov. 29. 6.

CHAP. XIII.

Some further Motives to turn to God.

Psal. 22. 27.

v. 36.

1. **L**ET us consider, that while we refuse, or neglect to do this, we forget our selves: and hence when people turn to the Lord, they are said to remember. *All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, &c.* It is a Prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, who turning to the Lord, are said to remember; but whom, or what should they remember? why in general, *themselves*, and their own interest, how much they were concern'd therein; more particularly, some refer it to what immediately goes before, *They shall praise the Lord that seek him, and their heart live for ever, that*

is, through the manifestations of his favour be filled with spiritual joy, this being indeed the living of the heart, as the contrary is its dying; or live a spiritual life here, and an eternal hereafter: and *remembering this*, they shall turn to the Lord; or 2. They shall remember their sins, the number and nature of them, how many and great they have been, and their misery by reason of them; what wrong by their sins they have done to God and their own souls: *He that sinueth against me wrongeth his own soul*; &c. they shall remember me, &c. because I am broken with their whorish heart, &c. Or 3. remember how much this is their duty, as also its equity, excellency, &c. and also how great God's goodness and mercy, and riches of grace, are to such as do indeed turn; or they shall remember God's patience, and the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering towards them, how long he hath born with them, though every day angry with them, and provoked by them, as it is said of the *Israelites*, that about forty years God suffered their manners in the wilderness, or he bore them as a burden; their forward and untoward carriages, were as an heavy burden is to a man, or as the peevishness and inquietness of a sucking Child is to the Nurse, &c. Now this they shall remember, and despise those riches of goodness no longer, but be led by them to repentance, &c. Thus there's very much, which if we did but remember, and seriously consider, might put us upon turning to God; and how long shall we forget God and our

1 Sam. 25. 27.
Cogitabunt de
suis peccatis &
miseriis, et
considerata
Dei misericor-
dia, tandem
serio expectent
opem, & reme-
dium suorum
vulnerum, i. e.
convertentur.

Moll.

Ezek. 6. 9.

Zach. 10. 9.

Prov. 8. 36.

Acts 13. 18.

ἐν τῇ φέρῃ

(i.e. forte pro

ἐν τῇ φέρῃ)

Rom. 1. 4.

Psal. 102. 4.

—2. 17.

our selves, and our own concerns, and our own and the Nations weal. O that at length *we might all remember, and turn to the Lord*, especially considering the lowd cries we have had to it alate, not onely from God's Word, but his works, his judicious proceedings: why? whom should we remember, if not our selves? or what, if not our own good? we are bid not to *forget to do good to others*, and shall we forget that which makes so much for our own good? We would that God should remember us, yea and he does, or it would be quickly sad with us, and shall not we remember him, nay our selves, but in refusing to return forget both? The Psalmist complains, *his heart was so smitten, &c. that he forgot to eat his bread*, that was sad and strange, but this is sadder; for that can but famish the body, but this the soul; that can but bring to the grave, but this to hell. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the Nations that forget God*, and forget themselves, to turn to him, and therefore let us no longer forget our selves, but in turning to the Lord shew at length that we remember both our selves and him; and the Lord remember us, that we may at length thus remember both our selves and him, which till we do, we forget both.

2. We not onely forget our selves, but while we yet go on in our sins *we are not our selves*, but (as it were) besides our selves; not onely out of our way, but are, as it were, out of our wits; not onely gone off from religion, but *right reason*: for to turn to the Lord is every way

way so much our concern, and so infinitely for our good, that were we but our selves, or in our right minds, we could not but resolve upon it, as it is said of the *Prodigal*, that as soon as ever he came to himself, he presently resolv'd to arise and go to his Father; so that before he was not, it seems, himself: no more are any, till they repent and turn to God, but are and act as mad men: and thus much the *Greek* word, made use of by the Holy Ghost for repentance, doth import: it signifies to be after wise, or to recover wisdom after folly, to recover ones wits, and come to himself and a right mind. All the ways of sin, are ways of folly, ways of silliness and madness, and they stamp him to be so, who persists in them; hence as in Scripture the godly, the true convert, is every where called wise, and prudent, so the wicked and impenitent, foolish, simple, silly. Sin, especially persistency in sin, being pure folly and madness. *How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? The turning away of the simple shall slay them. The simple pass on and are punished: and envy slayeth the silly one. Fools make a mock at sin, &c. and madness is in their heart, &c.* And they act indeed as such, as simple silly ones, as fools and mad men, and as such as are not themselves, nor in their right minds, for 1. they cut as it were and gash and wound themselves, pierce themselves, yea offer violence to their own souls, and love death, that is, act at that rate, as if they loved death; so they are said to lye in wait for their own blood, to despise

T 4

their

Luk. 15. 17.

Matth. 2. 2.
μετανοείτε.
resipiscite.

Prov. 1. 22, 31.

— 22. 3.

Job. 5. 2.

Prov. 14. 9.

Eccles. 9. 3 &c.

1 Tim. 6. 10.

Prov. 8. 36.

— 1. 18.

— 15. 32.

Psal. 109. 17. *their own souls, to love cursing.* And do not
 these act fillily and madly? shall we count him
 besides himself, that offers violence but to his
 own body, and not him much more which
 offers it to his own soul, yea *destroies his own*
soul; that pursues what will be his own death?
 Prov. 11. 19. *Whosoever committeth adultery with a woman,*
 &c. *it is said he lacketh or is void of understanding.*
 — 6. 31. *How wise soever he may think himself, or may*
be in worldly affairs, he hath not the least spark
of true spiritual wisdom, but is besotted, mad,
 Demens, Pisc.
 Junius, &c.
 Stultus terque
 quaterque.
 Remus.
so Junius, Piscator, and others, read it: He
acts not only against the dictates of Religion,
but Reason: and why? because he destroyeth
his own soul, his own life says Diodate before
men, and his own soul before God; he is a
self-murderer, a soul-murderer, and he himself,
and not others, is the proper cause of his own
ruin: and is not he void of understanding, is
not he mad? if not, who then is? others read
it, he that would destroy his own soul, let him
do it: but who, except a mad man, or one out
of his wits, would do that? 2. They strike at
others, even at God himself, fight against him,
 Job 15. 25, 26. *for he stretcheth out his hand against God, and*
strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.
He runneth upon him, &c. and this without
cause, nay notwithstanding the greatest reason
to the contrary. What iniquity have your Fa-
 Jer. 2. 5. &c. *thers found in me? and what have I done unto*
thee? &c. and are these themselves? But I do
but name things. 3. They are not at all affected
with their own misery, nor the greatest wrong
 they

they offer to themselves or others. They are in *their blood*, in the very *gall of bitterness*, under God's wrath and curse, vassals of sin and Satan, and guilty of eternal damnation, and in as great danger of it, as a Traitor apprehended is of being executed; and yet they are not at all affected therewith, but make light of it. They say, *they* Rev. 3. 17.
are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, when they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: as mad men, you know, fancy sometimes strange things of themselves, as that they are some great persons, when it is quite otherwise. And though by going on still in their sins they offer to themselves the greatest wrong, casting themselves as it were *into the water, and into the fire, and piercing themselves through with many sorrows*, yea offer the greatest wrong even to God himself. They do not onely *transgress his Law*, cross, and oppose, and thwart his *will*, darken his *glory*, affront his *majesty*, but strike at his very *being*, &c. and yet all this is but a light matter with these. *Is it a light thing* (says God) *that they do so and so?* implying, they thought it so; and *against whom* (says he) *do ye sport your selves?* &c. And is not this madness, and folly, for any to offer such wrong to themselves, yea to God himself, and yet make light of it? what to sport with poyson? to make a recreation of destruction, a mock of self-murder, nay of *God-murder*, as much as in them lyes? why, if such be not fools, and Bedlams, and besides themselves, who are? I do not mean natural fools,
but

Ezek. 8. 17.
 If. 57. 4.

Peccatum est
 Deicidium.

- but spiritual, which of all are the greatest; certainly he that goes about with a *whistle*, a *coat*, and a *babel*, is in a far better case than such. *It is*
- Prov. 10. 23. *in sport*, but to whom? *to a fool to do mischief.*
- 26. 18, 19. And, *As a mad-man, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, am I not in sport or in jest? in play? sad play, like that of those young*
- 2 Sam. 2. 14, 15 *men, who thrust their swords in one another's sides.*
4. *They provoke, and wage war even with God himself, enter the lists as it were with him, and is not this madness and folly? for is he a match for them? what, weakness contend with strength, impotency with omnipotency? a thistle with a Cedar? thorns with a consuming fire? a weak worm with an almighty God? Do we (says the*
- 1 Cor. 10. 22. *Apostle) provoke the Lord? are we stronger than he? or do we think to carry it against him? as if he had said, what desperate folly and madness is this? for is it not he that formeth*
- Amos 4. 13. *the mountains? &c.* As if a man should run himself against a stone-wall, or set his shoulder to a wall of brass. The Lord wonders at this folly: *Do they provoke me to anger says the*
- Jer. 7. 19. *Lord? do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? As if he had said, what madness is this, for who are like to have the worst of it? am I a match for them? Let the*
- II. 45. 9. *potshards strive with the potshards of the earth, but woe to him that strives with his maker. The*
- Jer. 10. 7. *King of Nations is to be feared, that appertains to him, not to be fought. For further discovery of this madness and folly, read these, and other*
- the

the like places : 2 King. 10. 4. Job 41. 8, 9, 10.

Prov. 16. 14. Psalm 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. Luk. 14.

31, 32. Psal. 76. 7. Job 9. 4. 5. *They being*

fallen refuse to arise, and though going on in sin,

they are quite out of their way, (every step in

sin being so) as the Lord hath often out of his

Word told them, yet they refuse to return ; and

the Prophet Jeremiah hath long since said what

such are. — They have refused to return, there-

fore I said, surely these are poor. How poor ?

poor in wit, for he adds, they are foolish ; but

of this I have occasionally spoken before.

6. *They recompense evil for good, and that even*

to God himself, he loads them daily with his be-

nefits, and they daily load him with their sins,

and foolish people and unwise, thus to requite the

Lord, &c. This is such folly and madness, that

the Lord calls the Heavens and the Earth to bear

witness of. Hear O Heavens, and give ear O

Earth, for the Lord hath spoken ; I have nour-

ished and brought up children, and they have re-

belled against me. The ox knoweth his owner,

&c. Shall evil be recompensed for good ? To him

that giveth gifts, every man is a friend, or de-

spisest thou the riches of his goodness, &c ? For

which of his kindneses do you deal thus with

God ? 7. They are taken up, and trouble them-

selves, about trifles, about small matters, and in

the mean time neglect matters of greatest mo-

ment, as their souls, and the great concerns of

them ; as if one condemn'd to dye, should be

taken up about his repast, and neglect to sue out

his pardon ; or as that woman, whose house

being

Deut. 30. 6.

Is. 1. 3, 3.

Jer. 18. 20.

Prov. 19. 6.

Rom. 2. 4.

being on fire, hasted to fetch out the lumber, but forgot the *child in the cradle, &c.* but I cannot enlarge. 8. *They prefer things that are base and vile before things of greatest worth and excellency*; as if a man should prefer *drofs* before gold, *pebles* before *pearls*, *dirt* before *diamonds*, who would but say such were fools and Idiots. When an Heir is impleaded for an Idiot, the Judge commands a *Counter*, or an *Apple*, together with a piece of *Gold*, to be set before him, to try which he will choose, and if he choose the Counter or Apple, he is cast for an Idiot, a natural fool. And this casts all such to be spiritual fools and Idiots, who yet go on in their sins, because they prefer the creature before the creatour; self, yea sin and Satan before God; broken cisterns, before the fountain of living waters; emptiness and vanity, before fulness and all-sufficiency; Swines husks, before the bread in their fathers house; hell before heaven, and the base sensual pleasures of sin, that are but for a season, before pardon of sin, and the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore, &c. 9. *They pretend to such an end*, and such a place, as to heaven and happiness, but never go in the way, nor make use of the means that lead to it: and what a silliness is that? 10. *Whereas they might be the Lord's freemen, they suffer themselves to be the vilest slaves and vassals*, even of sin and Satan, who seek their destruction, rather than their subjection; and what madness and folly is this to be at their beck and command? to ride them, and run them, and do with them

Jer. 2. 12, 13.

them what they please; to do their wills, and at their will; if they say, go, they go, or come, they come, or do this or that, they do it, as the servants of the Centurion: and were men themselves, or in their right minds, would they do this? no, they would suffer themselves no longer to be taken captive by such at their will. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves, or return to themselves,* the word signifies to grow sober again after drunkenness, and so to be restor'd to ones senses: and from the body 'tis apply'd to the mind, and when is this? when sinners by repentance extricate themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who before were taken captive by him at his will.

Thus you see, and that several ways, that such as still impenitently go on in their sins, do not only forget themselves, but are besides themselves; and as ever we would approve our selves other, we must repent and turn to the Lord.

Remember this (says God) and shew your selves men, Is. 46. 8. and if ever we would shew our selves men, and not beasts, in our right minds, and not mad, wise, and not still out of our wits, we must be sure we be such as to turn to God; for till then, whatever we, or others may think, according to what God and his Word judges, we are no better, yea and we shall see, and say of our selves shortly, as being no other, *we fools* Wisd. 4. 1. *accounted his life madness, &c.* But now we see, and well perceive, that he was wise, but we

2 Tim. 2. 25,
26.

ἀναγιγνώσκοντες
sanitate mentis recepta, &c.
Exza.

Translatio à corporis sensu ad animum. Per resipiscenciam homines ante captivi Diabolo, ex ejus vinculis elabuntur, & ita, ante ægri mente, sanitatem mentis recipiunt. *Toss.*

were

were the fools: And the sinners furious reflexion upon this his own wilful folly and madness, and the woful misery he hath brought upon himself thereby, is that which Divines call *the worm of Conscience*. Oh that therefore this folly might appear to sinners now, before it be too late! that so getting timely cured of it, they may not forever perish in it.

3. Let us consider, *these are times of turning*: 1. Of *sinful turning in regard of men*: O how strangely are many turned! some to one strange opinion and way, and some to another: how many have turn'd away *their ears from the truth*, and are turn'd to fables, to vain janglings, to dotings about questions, to perverse disputes, &c. and this is all the turn of many; and others are turn'd, but it is *aside after Satan, and their own lusts*. Some are turn'd *Atheists*, others *Papists*, *Antinomists*, *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Arminians*, *Socinians*, &c. and how many *Apostates*; they are turn'd indeed, but it is *with the dog to the vomit*, and with the *swine to wallowing in the mire*. Yea how many turn any thing, every thing, but what they should, and any way but the right: and now so many turning with evil turns, let us turn with an holy good and gracious turn; and so many turning out of the way, let us turn into the way; shall others turn after *Satan*, and not we to *God*? they to hell, and not we to heaven? they after vanity, and not we to our felicity? they after *their lusts*, and not we to the *Lord of life and glory*? 2. Of *judicial turnings*

1 Tim. 6. 5.

1 Tim. 5. 15.

1 Pet. 2. 22.

turnings in regard of God: for how many
 strange turnings and changes hath he made alare
 amongst us, turning many out of their places,
 employments, livelihoods? How did he turn
 our peace into war, and our health into sickness?
 Did he not in one year, in and about this City,
 turn above an hundred thousand to destruction?
 turn'd them into their Graves, out of their short
 homes into their long ones, turn'd them from
 the living to the dead, from living wights to
 be dead corps, and companions of the worms?
 How many families did he lay wast, and make de-
 solate all their company, changed their counte-
 nance, and turned the beauty of their visage in-
 to grisly deformedness, and sent them away, as
 Job speaks? yea hath he not turned our City
 into an heap, our famous City into ruines? We
 were, as I said, scarce got out of one fire, which
 devoured our persons, but another devours our
 estates and habitations; as if God was resolved
 to consume all, and to leave nothing of us stand-
 ing or remaining. And shall not both these
 fires refine us? if not, what fire may we ex-
 pect next, I leave that to you to judg. O how
 many did God on a sudden, and unexpectedly,
 and at once, turn out of all, out of their beds, out
 of their houses, out of their shops, out of their
 estates, out of their tradings, out of their ease,
 out of their enjoyments! and shall we not yet
 be turn'd from our sins? How did he bring
 down them that dwelt on high, yea the lofty
 city laid it low, he layed it low even to the ground, Is. 25. 2.
 and brought it even to the dust, so that the foot — 26. 1. 6.
 might

Lam. i. i.

might tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and steps of the needy. How did he turn that City into solitariness, that was full of people, and made her sit as a widow, that was great among the Nations, and Princess among the Provinces? yea stain'd all her glory, and chang'd her beauty and bravery into deformity? And London, once the glory of the world, is turn'd and hurl'd into confused heaps of dirt and rubbish. And after so many turnings shall we not yet turn to God? and turn from sin to holiness, & from our security to godly fear? O after so many turns let there follow one turn more, and that as the happy fruit and effect of all the former, and as that which God designed in them, and intended by them, even a turn unto the Lord, and out of those paths, the end of which will certainly be hell and damnation. Surely the time past may suffice as to what tends so much not onely to God's dishonour, but is so contrary to our own weal, and works our own woe, that grieves our best friend, and gratifies our worst enemy, &c. But as if it was not enough, shall we go on still? as if we were resolved not to turn from sin, 'till God turn us into hell. O turn at last, and the longer thou hast gone on in evil ways, see that the higher time it is to turn now. He goes far (we say) that never turneth, and why then dost thou not now turn after so many turns, that God hath made, and all to further this turn. Let me say to you, as sometimes Pharaoh's servants said to him in another case, How long shall your sins be a snare to you, and to the Nation, let them

Exod. io. 7.

go, before England be^t utterly destroyed? or care you not though all England be destroyed, so your sins *may live*; or as if thou hadst not treasured up unto thy self wrath enough *against that day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, wilt thou still through the *hardness and impenitency of thy heart*, go on to treasure up *more*? God forbid.

4. Consider, *nothing less than this can speak you sound Christians indeed*, and so such as shall be saved. 1. *Not parts nor gifts*, though never so eminent, no, it must be what is more excellent, &c. 2. *Not outward priviledges*; as having been baptiz'd, and often admitted to the Lord's Table, and having been constant hearers of such and such able Ministers, and it may be entertainers of them into your houses, and at your tables, and having had frequent converse with them, and it may be of good esteem with them; this may be, and yet you never be sound Christians, no, it must be true conversion that speaks you such. The Apostle speaking of the Jews, tells us, they were all *under the cloud*, and *passed through the Sea*, and were all baptised unto *Moses in the cloud, and in the sea*; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, &c. and yet with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. You may have vision, whiles it fails from others, and have bread whiles others starve; your fleece may be wet whiles others is dry, and may be as *Goshen*, whiles others are as *Egypt*, and yet be far from being

1 Cor. 12:31.

1 Cor. 10:1, 2;

3, 4.

Rom. 9. 4, 5.
Gal. 6. 15.

Matth. 8. 12.

Luk. 13. 26.

being good Christians. How great were the privileges of the Jews, yet *all were not Israel which were of Israel*; for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, that is, in Christ's Kingdom, so as to speak us such as are true Christians, and intitled to the Kingdom, neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, i. e. no outward privileges whatsoever, for under these two *Synechdochically* are comprehended all; by circumcision all those of the Jews, who stood much upon circumcision, and by uncircumcision all those of the Gentiles, as *Baptism, the Lord's Supper, &c.* but a new creature, or a new creation, that is, regeneration, saving conversion. Our Saviour tells us, *that the children of the Kingdom should be cast into utter darkness, &c.* i. e. they who were within the external Covenant, and seemed to be of the Kingdom, partook of the privileges, and made account they were the children of the Kingdom, they bore themselves up high; but all these did not speak them to partake of the grace of the Kingdom. We read of others that did *eat and drink in Christ's presence*, and such *in whose streets Christ himself taught*, they heard him, and at their tables entertain'd him, and had ordinary converse with him, and yet no better than workers of iniquity. 3. *Not meer morality or civility*, carrying it fair in the world; for these, though commendable in themselves, come short of conversion, and rested in, they are but beautiful abominations, a *smoother way*

to hell, and such are but as wild beasts tamed, or
tied up, their natures not being changed, &c.

4. *Not forms or professions of godliness*, shews
of holiness, and being as it were varnished over
with specious semblances of sanctity, when there
is nothing but rottenness within, &c.

5. *Not
merely knowing much*: for the Devils know so
much, as that they have their name from know-
ledg, and yet they are Devils still: and so men
may be very knowing, but not practising an-
swerably to their knowledg, be no better than
Devils incarnate, and their knowledg but aggra-
vate their sin, and increase their stripes.

6. *Not
going on in a formal way of duties*, and in a con-
stant customary course of performances, for this
many have done, and may do, yea be much in ex-
traordinary duties, & yet never be true Christi-
ans, because never sincere converts.

7. *Not Pha-
risaical righteousness*, for Christ hath said, ex-
cept our righteousness exceed the righteousness of
the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no case enter
into the Kingdom of heaven; and yet these
were very exact, and went very far, and it was
commonly conceited among the Jews, that if
but two in all the world went to heaven, one
should be a Scribe, and an other a Pharisee.

They going far in outward works, 1. of piety,
made long prayers, 2. of charity, gave much
alms, 3. of equity, tythed Mint, Annis, and
Cummin, 4. of curtesy, invited Christ often to
their tables; and yet but hypocrites, because
they wanted a sound work of conversion upon
their souls.

8. *Not being of such a sect or party,*

2 Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Δαίμον quasi
δαιμόν, i. e.
sapiens, gna-
rus, peritus,
et de daemō,
scire.

Jam. 4. 17.

Luk. 12. 46.

Is. 58. 1, 2, 3.

Ezek. 33. 31,

32. Luk. 18,
12.

Matth. 5. 20.

nor simply of such a Church, or Society, or Congregation, or way, or judgment, or opinion, or being hearers of such or such Ministers, or such a ones people, or the like, though I fear too many lay too much stress upon these in these days; as if they must needs be good Christians, and true Saints, because they are in such a way, and of such a Church, and such a Congregation, and adhere to such a party, and are hearers of such Ministers, and such a ones people: as in the Apostles time, how many did bear themselves up with this, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, and I of Cephas*; one he cryes up *Paul*, and his preaching, and bears himself up as being his disciple, and one of his people; another he cryes up *Apollo*, &c. another *Cephas*; but what says the Apostle, *Is Christ divided, was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul? and whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? I or while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollo, are ye not carnal, &c.* The Apostle *Jude* speaks of some in his days, *who separated themselves, and yet were sensual, not having the spirit, &c.* they were destitute of true grace, and the Spirit of regeneration, as appear'd from fleshly lusts having the upper hand and rule in them. And the Prophet *Isaiab* speaks of some which said to others, *Stand by your selves, come not near to us, for we are holier than you*, and yet were a *smoak in God's nose*, very loathsome unto him. But let not any here mis-construe what I say, for I do not speak against

1 Cor. 1. 12.

23.

—3. 3.

—v. 4.

Jud. 19.

Is. 65. 5.

gainst fellowships, or societies, but I would not have any simply take up in this, for it is not this, but sound conversion that speaks a Christian. Judas was of the best fellowship that ever was, of that very society that Jesus Christ himself and the Apostles were of, *one of the twelve*, and yet for all that a Devil, as Jesus Christ himself declares, *Joh. 6. 70. Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?* See, here's one of the very society of Christ himself, and his Apostles, and yet a Devil; a strange expression, but that we know who said it, *i. e.* of a devilish nature, one of his children: and if there was a Devil among those that were of the very fellowship of Jesus Christ himself, and his Apostles, we had need look about us, for what fellowship or society can there be under heaven, whereof people may be, and yet not be Devils incarnate? How fair soever they may carry it outwardly, as Judas no doubt did, insomuch that when Christ told them, *one of you shall betray me*, they questioned among themselves who it should be, no more suspecting Judas than themselves. *Joh. 13. 21, 22.* And therefore I beseech you let none bear up themselves, nor lay so much stress on this; it is sound conversion that must speak you sincere Christians, and not being of such a way or society. *Jer. 7. 3. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, amend your ways and your doings: and, v. 4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these,* they pointed (as it were) with the finger

Rom. 4. 17.

to the temple of the Lord ; why, we have the Temple, and the Temple-worship, &c. but not amending their ways, all were but lying words. *For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost, &c.* The purest Churches may have *impure members*, and the most orderly congregations *disorderly persons* ; and among reall Saints may be such as are but *painted sepulchres* ; and though they have the *Euge* and approbation of men, yet may they have the *Apae* and disallowance of God, and all his holy Angels. It was a notable speech uttered long since by an *English* Christian of a reformed Church in the *Netherlands* ; We have the good orders here, but you have the good Christians in *England* ; O that it could be said so still : and *did* (says a learned godly Divine now with the Lord) *the servants of Christ know what it is to live in reformed Churches with unreformed spirits, under strict order with loose hearts, how forms of Religion breed but forms of Godliness, how men by Church discipline learn their Church postures, and there rest, they would pray as hard for purity of heart, as purity of ordinances, without which it matters not much what judgment or perswasion, or society a man is of ; for however he may be a zealot in bearing witness to what he likes best, yet he may be bad enough in the witness of his own conscience. It is a grand design of the Devil, when men will needs look after religion, to make them believe, that to be of such a Church or party is to be religious, and*

to trust to that in stead of godliness; and how many do so! but this being but an house built on the sand, *when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon it, it will fall, and great will be the fall thereof.* Among even the *Virgins themselves*, i. e. those who bore the name of Christians, and had Lamps, made fair professions, are found foolish ones, such as though they had *lamps*, had no *oyl*, no true grace, and therefore are not owned by Christ, but *shut out of heaven*. 9. *Not having religious parents*, or relations, nor having been brought up in godly families. This is indeed a mercy, and may prove helpful, but speaks not you good, unless you experience a saving work of grace upon your own souls. *Isaac's goodness* did not make *Esau* so, nor *Elie's*, *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, &c. It is said of Christ's brethren, *for neither did his brethren believe in him*; their being so neer allyed to Christ, did not makethem believers, and yet if any kin or alliance would have done it, Christ's might. *Two* (says Christ) *shall be in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left. Think not then to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for except you have the faith of Abraham, it will nothing avail you.* It is said of one *John of Valois*, that he was Son, Brother, Unkle, Father of a King, and yet himself never King. There may be found some good even in the worst families, and some bad in the best, as is sadly experienc'd. We read of Saints in *Cesar's* household, and of sons of *Belial* in *Elie's*. 10. Not what the

Matth. 7. 27

Joh. 7. 5.

Luk. 17. 34. &c.

Math. 3. 9.

Perceperant aliquam cognitionem veritatis Evangelicæ, viz. de Christo, & glorioso illo adventu futuro. *Tossan.*

Magnum est discrimen inter electos & vere credentes, & inter *negocios*, qui obiter quædam dona Spiritus gustarunt quoad notitiam & professionem, non autem vere & efficaciter regenerati sunt, &c. *Tossan.*

Apostle declares, *Hebr. 6. 4, 5.* as *having been once enlightened, i. e. with common illumination, having tasted of the heavenly gift*; some taste, but they were but taste, not let down, as it were, *&c. being made partakers of the holy Ghost, i. e. in regard of more common gifts which were much imparted in the primitive Church; having tasted the good word of God, i. e. felt some sweetness in the promises of the Gospel, so as to hear it with joy; and the powers of the world to come,* some glimpse of heaven, or some flash of hell, upon the conscience, or some taste of the joys of heaven, as *Balaam, Numb. 23. 10.* Now these seem great things indeed, but they must be better than these that speak us Christians indeed, and *accompany salvation*, as the Apostle expresses it, even saving conversion, true faith, and unfeigned love, &c. *v. 9. But beloved we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have shewed towards his name, &c.* And therefore never let any rest, or take up in these or the like, for it must be more than all these that must speak you true Christians, even sound conversion, which therefore never rest till you do attain to.

Matth. 9. 13.

5. This is that *which all call and cry to us for.* God in his Word he every where calls for it, and Jesus Christ he came from heaven to call to it, and still by his Ministers calls for it; this Church and Kingdom call for, City, Countrey, towns, families, bodies, souls, estates, liberties, lives,

lives, relations, little ones, all as to the weal of them; and this the Gospel, and all that is near or dear to us call for, yea and all God's dealings and dispensations; mercies, judgments, smiles, frowns, words, blows; the sinfulness of the times, and the sickliness of the times, the sword which did eat the flesh, and drink the blood of so many thousands, and the pestilence which walked in darkness, and destroyed at noon day, doing execution continually, causing thousands to fall at our side, and ten thousands at our right hand, laying waste whole families, and making burying work 'till scarce room to bury in, sweeping away in one year, in and about the city, so many thousands; and this that dreadful fire calls for, which in a few days reduc'd so famous a city into ashes. O how often hath the Lord smitten us, and that with sore smittings, such as have not been in our days, nor in our fathers days before us! such droughts, such winds and storms, such a pestilence, such a fire, such grievous gripes, whereby multitudes were so suddenly swept away, above four thousand three hundred in one year, and many the year after! Yea the Lord hath smitten us with sorer smittings, spiritual, smitten us in our *Shepherds*, solemn assemblies, in our *delectable things*, with famine, in many places *not of bread, but of hearing the word of the Lord!* &c. And what do all these strokes mean? or what is their language, and what do they call and cry for? surely for this, that we *repent and turn to God*; this is their voice to the city, and to the countrey, to all

Joel 1. 2.

Amos 8. 11, 12.

Micah 6. 9.

all sorts *high and low, rich and poor, great and mean*, to all, from him that sitteth upon the throne, to him that goes by the *high-way side*. And shall we not hearken to so many lowd calls and cryes ! how then should God hearken to us ?

6. This is that which, *when God's judgments are in the earth*, he looks for, and counts upon, viz. that then the *inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness, i. e.* learn to amend their lives. This they then should and ought for to do, and if ever God counts upon it, they will do it then, his judgments being means thereof.

If. 26. 9.
Per castigatio-
nes divinas ad
penitentiam
adducuntur.
Pisc.

2 Chr. 15. 4.

Hof. 5. 15.

Pf. 119. 67.

2 Sam. 24. 29.

They in their trouble did turn unto the Lord, &c. and, in their affliction they will seek me early. Absalom sent for Joab once and again to come unto him, but he would not come, but when he set his corn on fire then he ran, &c. and shall not we to God, when he hath set first our bodies as it were a fire, and then afterwards our houses and estates ? This he expects, and shall we still frustrate his expectation ? shall he count upon it in vain, and when for our own weal ? what may we think then, but that he will frustrate ours, and while we look for peace, no good come, and for a time of healing but behold trouble ?

Jer. 14. 19.

7. This is that, which the want of, is the great matter and ground of God's complaint, and of his controversy with and against a people ; not so much their departures, as their refusals to return. This is that which roles so much in his thoughts, as that he knows not how as it were to digest it ; to do evil is bad, but still to persist in it, that is saddest and worst of all. How often does

does the Lord complain of this, five times at least in one chapter; that though he had sent such and such judgments among them, yet had they not return'd unto him, and so in many other places besides. We are ready indeed to complain of God's *punishments*, but he of our *impenitency*, and his matter of complaint is the saddest, impenitency under judgments, being a thousand times worse than the judgments themselves; and sinners not returning, far more sinful than all their sins besides. And let not the Lord then still have cause of this sad complaint against us, after such a multiplicity of rods that he hath scorged us with alate, for what height of defection will that argue? and how greatly will it incense his displeasure?

8. Not turning to God when he smites, *punish him upon greater severities, yea makes him resolve upon final ruine*. How often does he threaten in *Leviticus*, that if they would not reform, he would yet *punish them seven times more*, and *bring seven times more plagues upon them*; yea he tells them, *they should eat the flesh of their sons, and their daughters* (sad meat,) but God will overcome when he judges, and the stoutest sinners must not think to carry it against him; *But God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one that goes on still in his trespasses*. Those in *Amos* for all those judgments inflicted on them not returning unto the Lord, he resolves therefore, *thus will I do unto thee*: what? why worse than ever I have done yet, I will take a severer course, and come with my last

Amos 4. 5, 6, 8, &c.

Hos. 7. 9, 10.

Is. 1. 4, 5.

—9. 13.

Jer. 5. 3.

—8. 4, 5.

—6. 28, 29.

&c.

Lev. 26. 18.

—21. 29.

See also *Pf.* 7.

12, 13.

Is. 9. 12, 13, 14.

Ezek. 24. 12.

13. *Job* 9. 4.

Prov. 11. 21.

&c.

Psal. 68. 21.

Amos 4. 12.

Durius nunc
tecum agam;
quia cogit me
tua obstinatio,
& ultimam
poenam infli-
gam; absque
ulla mitigatio-
ne, &c. *Calv. in
locum.*

Ezra 9. 13, 14.

Jer. 4. 11.

Jer. 45. 13.

last and heaviest stroke: or the Lord hereby would the better (as some think) decipher out to them the dreadfulnes of this stroke, it being such as could not be exprest, and therefore wraps it up in silence, and leaves it to them to think what it might be. Thus it is not so much sinning but persisting still in sin; and that notwithstanding God's judgments, that brings final ruine, this seals the stone of destruction upon nations, and persons. *And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, &c. Seeing thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments, &c. wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hast consumed us, so that there shall be no remnant, nor escaping?* When winds sent to fan and cleanse, lie without success, then must be expected a dry wind from the wilderness, not to fan nor to cleanse, but utterly to lay waste: and for God to resolve that his eye shall not spare, neither will he have pity, but to say as he did of those Jews, *cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth; such as are for death to death, and such as are for the sword to the sword, &c.* This brought final ruine upon Israel, and after upon Jerusalem, and so hath done upon other nations, as Germany, which Brentius expounding upon *Is. 9. 12, 13.* foretold. And how can we think but it will bring the same upon England, unless we speedily return? It was a notable speech of a friend in a letter out of New England to one here; *Our hearts are full of fears for Old England, and that which*

Sovereign way of being saved.

301

which makes us fear most; it is that God's visitations bring forth no better fruit, than increase of sin: we may fear lest that God should visit seven times more, the Lord give repentance and turning to God, that God may in mercy turn to his people, &c. And how can it be otherwise, this being the great end of God in all his judgments, whether publick or private, to reduce people to himself; and for God to lose his end, and smite in vain, how sad is it? and it being also a magnifying of the creature, that he will debate with it, which Job admires that he should condescend so low, as not onely to speak but strike, and so make use of all ways and means to reclaim. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth, and want of bread, &c. as if the Lord had said, And in that also I have not been wanting neither in words nor blows, neither by speaking nor smiting, and to have all slighted, and nothing regarded? And besides, this, it is God's last remedy, he speaks once and again, yea often, and when that will not do, he strikes, and that with gentler, and then severer strokes, but when these will not do, he rejects: moreover God then in a more special manner, commanding sinners to return, And if they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then he commandeth that they return from iniquity, &c. and yet they not returning, what does it argue but stubbornness and rebellion? and what is it, but to contemn God, and his rod? as if we car'd not what he did in the world? yea what is it, but to bid as it were open defiance to heaven, or as if we bid him do his

Job. 7. 17, 18.

Amos 4. 6.

Job 36. 8, 10.

Is. 1. 24.

2 Chr. 28. 22.

Jer. 4. 4.

his worst ; and God knows not how as it were to bear such any longer, they are such a burthen to him, and therefore resolves to ease himself of them. — *Ab I will ease me of mine Adversaries, &c.* this makes sin rebellion, and out of measure sinful, when though God afflicts, sinners will still hold fast their sins, and though they cannot hold fast other things, as their health, strength, estates, liberties, relations, outward comforts, yet they will hold fast them, and not let them go wharever goes ; and though God does then as it were *hedg up sinners ways with thorns, yet they break through.* This was that which set such a brand and Emphasis of disgrace upon *Abaz*, that all might observe and take notice of : *And in the times of his distress, yet did he trespass more against the Lord, this is that King Abaz.* And so will the Lord say another day of others, this is *that man, that woman, that family, that people, that person*, who when God afflicted, yet trespass'd more and more ; and this does so incense God's wrath, as to blow it up into a consuming flame, and such a flame *as shall not be quencht.* And therefore what now remains, but that with all seriousness and earnestness we forthwith set our selves to and about this great work and concern, both of our selves, and the Nation, that with all vehemency we *implore it*, & with our utmost endeavours *prosecute it*, making use of all ways and means whereby we may attain it, and not stand it out still, 'till inevitable destruction overtake us ; else we must take what follows, we must
either

either remove our sins, or God will for ever remove himself and his mercies.

CHAP. XIV.

To incourage one another to turn to God.

AND this work now being so blessed a work, and of such infinite importance, let us encourage one another unto it, let us say as those in *Hosea*, *come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, &c.* Hos. 6. 1, 2. as if they had said, And this it is the wisest course we can take, it being our own happiness and good, and not God's, who is *all-sufficient* : as if a man be warm'd and refresh'd by the *Sun*, he is benefited himself, but not the *Sun* ; and if a man drinks of the *fountain*, he profits himself not the *fountain* ; so God needs not our conversion, if we turn, what does it advantage him ? not at all ; the profit and advantage is our own, and upon this account he desires it, not for any need he hath of us, but for the need we have of him. And shall we not then incourage one another to this ? and say as those in the *Lamentations*, *Wherefore doth a living man complain ? a man for the punishment of his sins. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, &c.* Lam. 3. 39. 40. As if they had said, What do we complaining, who are yet living ? it is sad indeed with us, but it is a mercy it is no worse, that our Bodies are not in the Grave, and our Souls in Hell ;
for

for whatever is on this side Hell is Mercy: and alive, and complain? and when for the punishment of Sin? the evil of punishment being little to the evil of sin, the *bitterness for sin*, to the *bitterness in sin*: one strikes at *us*, the other at *God*; one at the *Creature* , the other at the *Creatour* ; the one at what is *finite*, the other at what is *infinite*; and the worst that punishment does, or can do to us, is little to what Sin does to, or against God: the Sinner gives worse *gall and wormwood* to God to drink, than he does to the Sinner; hence the Church resolves to bear the indignation of the Lord because *she had sinned against him*; and hence, says the Lord, to a people who would plead with him about his proceedings, as if he had been rigorous towards them: *Wherefore*, saies he, *will ye plead with me*? plead with me? Come then, saies God, and I will plead with you, and stop your mouths with one word; I will say but this, and it is enough for ever to silence you, for ever opening your mouths more against me. *Ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord*, and do but sit down and seriously weigh what you have done, in doing that, and against whom you have done it, and there's enough to silence you. As to what ever I have done to you, it's little to what you do against me; and, O! that Sinners would but consider this. *Ye have transgressed against me*, and thereby what have ye done? even broken my law, crossed and contradicted my will, darken'd my glory, griv'd and embitter'd my Spirit, tar-

ned

Micah 7. 9.

Jer. 2. 29.

Is. 43. 24.

ned the back to me, and not the face, and wearied me, and made me even to serve, though a God of such infinite majesty; and shall we now complain, or plead with the Lord? no, let us rather encourage one another to return: come and let us return. We read indeed of other comes, encouraging comes to that which is evil, and destructive, and these have been too too much the Comes of England, which hath made things come to that pass as they are. *Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill our selves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundantly. Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah, &c. come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words, &c. Come, and let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause, &c.* But these are hellish pernicious comes, and have occasioned so many great and heavy judgments to come upon us, one on the neck of another: let us therefore now at length change our comes, and let them be, *come and let us repent, come and let us turn again unto the Lord, come and let us amend our ways and our doings, and get our hearts and ways right with God, that so things may be right with us: come, and let all our other strifes end now in this, who should be first herein, in turning to God, and so in promoting our own and the Nations weal. Others are striving for worldly precedency, but let us for spiritual, and it is no pride here to go one before another, but he is humblest that goes first. And these are blef-*

Is. 56. 12.

Jer. 18. 18.

Prov. 1. 11.

Matth. 1. 21.

Hebr. 9. 22.

II. 59. 1, 2.

2^d sal. 64 5.

sed comes and calls indeed, to call one another to the most high, to incourage one another to turn to God the chief good, and to come off from sin so exceeding evil, yea the greatest and chiefest and indeed onely true evil, and the cause of all other evils, which is it self a punishment, yea the worst of punishments, the work of the Devil, and worse than hell and Devils, and all other evils whatsoever, which threw down *Angels to hell*, and has more evil in it than all the *Angels in heaven have good*; which was Christ's great work, in coming into the world, to save from, and which nothing but his blood can make expiation of; which not onely offends and dishonours, and offers the greatest injury to the blessed God, but exceedingly wrongs our selves, our own souls, which debases, distresses, defiles, befools, hardens, destroys, spoys our good things, is the sting of our evil things, robs us of our joy, peace, safety, separates from God the chief good, and brings horrors of conscience here, and to eternal perdition hereafter; which may have a moments pleasure, but an eternities torment. And can we do better than to incourage one another here, to come up to so great a good, and to come off from so great an evil? Do others incourage one another in evil matters, and not we in what is so good? to quit sins, and the Devil's, and hell's quarters, murderers quarters, our deadly enemy's quarters, which seek our blood, and the destruction of our precious souls, and to come into heaven's quarters, into God's and our friends quarters. O who would not incourage here,

here, and say, *come*, and let us return unto the Lord, and so betake our selves to the onely way of our own and the Nations weal? And O that it was once come to this, that so both our own and the Nations utter ruine might be prevented, which God professedly declares, *yea swears* he has no pleasure in. We read of those indeed who were ready to cast such a calumny upon God, as if he took pleasure in their death; for they said, —if our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how then should we live? &c. as if they had said, What do you tell us of living, or prophesie of life, when we find the quite contrary that we are dying? Now as to this God vindicates himself, asserting the clean contrary by an Oath: *Say unto them, as I live says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live, &c.* As death is indeed an act of justice, punishing the impenitent, so it hath the nature of good in it, and so it is pleasing to God, who is just as well as merciful; but as it is meerly the creatures ruine and misery, so he delights not in it, and to this he *swears*. Indeed God cannot lye, and so his word might be enough, but the more to confirm what he says he is pleased to swear, and happy we; for whose sake God swears if we believe, but miserable we, if he shall swear and we yet not believe him; and further, to shew his unwillingness that we should dye, he doubles his invitation to turn, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye dye O house of Israel.* And this ingemination, as

Ezek. 33. 10.

V. 11.

O beatos nos,
quorum causa
Deus jurat; O
miseri nos, si
non juranti
Domino credi-
mus. Tertul.

it shews our dulness and love to our sins, and loathness to leave them, so a vehemency and intention of spirit in God, there being much life, spirit, and affectionateness in such expressions, and it shews also a necessity of compliance; for that cannot but be a matter of great weight, that we are so often invited to, such Scripture *ingenominations* not being vain, but the more words from God the more weight, and what is doubly prest must needs be doubly our duty, and that which we are doubly ingag'd to. Surely as it shews God desires it much, so that it concerns us much, and what indeed can concern us more than that? which unless we do, *we as certainly perish as the Lord lives*. And what goodness and condescension is it in the great God, that he should so earnestly and so often invite us to that which is so much for our *own good*; and that though he cannot be better'd nor made happier by us, yet that our salvation should be so dear to him: and therefore let us set to it our selves, and encourage one another all we can, looking up to God for help, for though we can *turn away*, we cannot of our selves turn *again*; we can wound, but not heal our selves; throw our selves down, but not raise our selves up; loose our selves, but not reduce our selves.

Ps. 119. 176.
Hos. 13. 9.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

To see to it, that our turning to God be true and real.

AND let us not onely encourage one another to turn to God, but be sure our conversion be *sincere*. 1. Let there be a *sound conviction of sin*, and a kindly *compunction* for it, with a *thorow aversion from it* to the Lord, both in *heart and life*, in *inward principles* and *outward practises*, there being a change both of the *disposition*, and *affection*, and *love to sin*, within, and of the *conversation* without, and these depend one upon another. For 'till the conscience be *thoroughly convicted of sin*, how should the heart be *kindly contrite for sin*? and 'till the heart be *contrite for sin*, how should it *forsake or turn from sin*? and 'till it do *turn from sin*, how should it *turn to God*? And 2. let this turn be such as *is of God*, as also *unto God*, quite Jer. 4. 1. through unto him, and not to any thing below him, or on this side him. O how sad is it to suffer shipwrack neer the haven, to turn towards God, and yet never to reach nor take up in God, as our true and proper center! to come up out of *Egypt*, and yet never to come into *Canaan*! not to be *far from the Kingdom of God*, from heaven, and yet to fall short of it, and to be turned into *hell*! 3. Let it be such as *arises from faith*.

faith. 4. Let it be *hearty*, with *all* or the *whole heart*; no part of the heart here being reserved for sin, but the whole heart inclin'd one way, and that to God: as it is said of good King *Josiah*, that like unto him *there was no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, &c.*

Quod cor non facit, non fit.

Indeed the heart is the main, and what is done here, unless it be with the heart, it is not done. And in what should we be hearty indeed, if not in what we do to God, and in what tends so infinitely to our own good? 5. Let it be *universal*. 1. As to the *subject turning*, the whole man, body and soul, and all the faculties of the one, and members of the other, compleat as to *parts*, though not *degrees*, as to *extension* though not *perfection*; in every *part*, though but in *part*. As the Air in the dawning, is light in every part, though but in part; else if any *part* be unturn'd, we shall (as one expresses it) with our whole *go to hell*, and therefore as all of us, and in us, is turn'd away from God, never let us rest till all be turn'd again to God. 2. As to the *object*, *turn'd from*, and *turn'd to*, from all *sin* to all that is *holy* and righteous, from every false and crooked way to every true and right way; for as there's no Brook so small, no River so little, but if a man follow it, it will bring him to the Sea, so there's no sin so small, but if a man addict himself unto it, and still follow and pursue it to the end, it will certainly bring him to the *dead salt Sea of eternal horrors*, and everlasting torments. And therefore let us turn from

Pl. 119. 101, 128.

Optima poenitentia est nova vita. *Luther.*
Poenitere à malis, & abstinere à malis.

from all sin, and every evil way to the contrary good; and give me leave here to instance in some few particulars, as from our *pride* and haughtiness of mind, to *humility* and lowliness of mind. It is very sad, and bodes ill, that though Trade decays, and mens estates are *lower*, yet mens minds are still *high*. How many are poorer in purse, but not in *spirit*? their means is less and lower, but pride and luxury rather greater and higher; as if though God humble them, they were resolv'd not to be humbled. *From our garish flanting, and immodest attire, and that allures to wantonness, (the great sin of these times,) to what is sober and modest, and becoming such as profess godliness, and the fear of the Lord. Tamar's apparel made Judah to*

take her for an harlot, and however such (says one) may be honest, yet such as are honest, will hardly take them to be so, because they lay themselves and others open to temptation. Augustus Caesar was wont to say, that stately and light Apparel was the banner of pride, and nest of luxury; and if (says one of the fathers) women adorn themselves, so as to provoke men to lust after them, though no evil follow upon it, yet those women shall suffer damnation, because they offered poyson to others, though none would drink it. A very Heathen could say, where there is great care of dressing, there's little care of goodness: but now Professours themselves think it little or no fault to be as garish in their Apparel as others, and to follow every foolish strange upstart fashion, exceeding in

Gen. 38. 15.

Vestitus infir-
nis, ac mollis,
superbia vexil-
lum est, & lux-
uriae nidus.
Hieronymus.

Cultus magna
ubi cura, ibi
magna virtutis
incuria, *Cato.*

their apparel beyond their calling, and above their means, &c. but let such read and weigh these and the like places. *If. 3. 16. &c. Zeph. 1. 8. 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. Rom. 12. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 14. &c. From our excess and riot, and prodigious luxury, to temperance and sobriety; from all filchiness, uncleanness, and obscenity, to purity, chastity, and possessing our vessels, that is, our bodies, in sanctification, and honour, and not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentils which know not God. From our profanations of God's name and day, to the sanctifying of the same; from our carelessness and security, to godly fear and Christian vigilancy; from our earthliness to heavenly mindedness, our covetousness to contentedness with such things as we have; from our lukewarmness, indifferency, and formality in the things of God, to zeal, fervency, and ardency of affection. From our slighings and despilings of God's ordinances, to the setting of an higher value and esteem upon them; from our licentiousness to more strictness, and barrenness and ingratitude, to greater thankfulness and fruitfulness. From our divisions, strifes, and contentions one with another, to union and endearedness of affection one towards another; from our animosities to unanimity, from our rash and harsh censurings, and judgings of others, to judging our selves; from our forwardness and fierceness, to gentleness and meekness; from our deceitfulness and fraudulency, to faithfulness and sincerity; from our self-seekings, and lookings every man to his own things,*

to

1 Thes. 4. 4, 5.

Heb. 13. 5.

Rom. 12. 11.

to self denyings, and looking every man also to Phil. 2. 4.
 the things of others; *from our harshness*, chur-
 lishness, and uncharitableness, to kindness and
 readiness to do good; *from speaking evil*, or 1 Thes. 5. 15.
 rendring evil for evil to any man, to shew all
 meekness, and follow that which is good, unto
 all; *from all error*, heresie, and strange do-
 ctrines and opinions, to the form of sound 2 Tim. 1. 13.
 words, and the faith once delivered to the Saints;
from fickleness and unstayedness in the truth,
 to establishment, &c. In a word, *from what e-* Jude 3:
ver is offensive, and displeasing to God, and pre-
 judicial to our selves or others, to whatever is
 pleasing and acceptable to God, and profitable
 to our selves and others. And indeed the very
 essence of repentance lies in this, *in our turning*
with our whole man from all sin, with grief and
hatred of it, unto God, and all that is good; but
 while we condemn sin with our tongues, if yet
 we regard and take pleasure in any sin in our
 hearts, we are far yet from God, yea abomina-
 ble to him. 6. *Let our turning to God be from*
right principles, and upon right grounds, spiritual
 grounds, as *in the name of Christ*, in his Col. 3. 17.
 strength, and as looking for acceptance both of
 our persons, and repentance, in and through
 him, and his merits, mediation, and satisfaction.
 So let it be *in conscience of his commands*, and *out*
of love to God, because we love God, therefore
 let us fear any longer to displease him, and turn
 to him, that we may no longer offend nor pro-
 voke him. It is said of *Luther*, that having heard
 a grave Divine say, that that was kind repen- Staup.
 tance

tance, which began from the love of God, ever after the practice of repentance was sweeter to him. So out of hatred to sin, as an enemy to God and his glory, and our own souls good, and because of that repugnancy and contrariety that there is in it to God, and his holy nature and law.

7. Let it be for right ends, as the glory of God; this must be the main and chiefest end. If whe-

1 Cor. 10. 31. ther we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God: how much more when we repent, and turn to God must that be, that he may be glorified? 8. Let it be speedy,

Zeph. 2. 1, 2. Gather your selves together, &c. before the decree come forth, before the day pass, &c. O how does the Lord long, and is as it were in pain and travel 'till it be! 'till we leave our sins, and turn

Jer. 13. 27. to him! — O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be? and, how long shall thy vain thoughts lodg within thee? and, how

— 31. 22. long wilt thou go about, O thou back-sliding daughter? and, — how long will this people pro-

Numb. 14. 11. voke me? and, how long will it be ere they believe me, &c. And shall we make God long still in vain, and be as it were in pain and travel? Why

Jer. 3. 1. God will do that which others will not do: They say if a man put away his wife, &c. but thou hast played the harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to me says the Lord. A man will hardly entertain a servant that seeks to him in his old

age, that refus'd his service all his life before, and how should God? and yet he will, if sincere, and true. But though true repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true, for

mens

Nulla poenitentia seria, est unquam nimis sera. Ambr.

mens sins then rather leave them, than they their sins; and such a cessation from sin, is not repentance for sin, and therefore take we heed of delays, whereby we do more strengthen sin, harden our own hearts, and give Satan stronger hold, and fuller possession. Had we a thorn in our foot, or a mote in our eye, would we delay to get them out? and is not the guilt of sin worse in the soul? Certainly, a man had better lie under the weight of all the mountains in the world, than under the guilt of one sin; we are bid not to withhold good from the owners thereof; *Say not to thy neighbour, go and come again, and to morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.* And shall we still withdraw or withhold our selves from God, whose own we are in many respects, and who, when he comes to us, comes but for his own? and shall we detain still from him what is his own? which we do, while we still refuse to turn to God, and lock up our selves as it were in the Devil's hold. But let us remember we are the Lords, we are bought with a price, and he is not onely our owner, but our Creatour and Benefactour; and 'tis well for us we have so good an owner, and so kind a Lord, and let us not then withhold our selves a moment longer, from him, but yeild our selves to him; for is there any safety but under his wings, any happiness but in his presence, any peace without his pardon? &c. or can we be holy and happy too soon, blessed too soon, pardoned too soon? in the love, in the heart of God too soon? under the shines of his face, in the

Peccata ipsos deserunt, non ipsi peccata, &c. Ambros.

Prov. 3. 27, 28.

Libertas bonum inestimabile. Nulli bene venditur auro.

Nec bellum saevior ulla, quam servi rabies. &c.
Gen. 9. 25.

Quia semper peccamus, semper poenitentiam agere debemus. Hier.

in the light of his countenance too soon? free, and from under the vassalage of sin and Satan too soon? especially, freedom being so desirable, and such an inestimable good. Who would not be, *sui juris*, free? The *Rabbins* have a saying, that if the heavens were parchment, and the Sea ink, it could not sufficiently contain the praises of liberty; how much less of spiritual liberty? of being made free from sin, so as to become servants to God, and have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, to be freed from his slavery, who is a slave himself, and no slavery to the service of a slave. It was *Canaan's* curse, that he should be a servant of servants; and are not our sins the very *gangrenes*, and *plague-sores* of our souls? the utter enemies of our peace, safety, and felicity, which still distemper and disquiet us, and shall these be retain'd still, or can they too soon be abandoned? 9. Let it be daily, constant, and continual, for we daily sin, continually transgress, and therefore are still to be daily acting repentance; and there being still sin and corruption in us, we are still daily and continually to be turning from it to the contrary good: we daily wash our hands, and cleanse our houses, and so let us by repentance, our hearts, of those daily infirmities we fall into. We are still letting in sin, and therefore by repentance should be still pumping it out. This might occasion that saying of *Tertulian*, that he was born to nothing else but repentance: for we having brought upon our selves a miserable necessity of sinning daily and continually,

nually, what can we be more born to, than to be repenting daily and continually? 10. *Let it be more and more increasing*, and persevering to the end, not onely our daily course, but 'till we have finished our course; not resting in this, that we were once turn'd, but still daily more and more turning from all iniquity, and practising the contrary duties of Christianity. If conversion be good, certainly the more the better, and the fullest is best: we should get more and more chang'd and turn'd into the Lord's image, from glory to glory, &c. and every day get nearer heaven and salvation then other. It is said of *Julius Caesar*, whose warlick exploits were so famous, that he still went forward, thinking nothing done (as it were) while any thing was yet to be done. So let us with *Paul*, forgetting those things behind, reach forth to what is yet before, & take we heed of Apostacy from God, and his ways, and having known the way of righteousness, of turning from the holy commandment, to the crooked ways of sin; for what was this but to bring as it were an evil report upon God and his ways, and to make as if his ways were not such as the Scripture declares them to be, yea and as if the ways of sin were better, and to be preferr'd before them; for having try'd both, such as more eligible, turn to the other again, & what a dreadful thing is it to bring as it were an evil report upon God and his ways! It is said of those that brought but an evil report upon the land, that they died by the plague before the Lord; but what will become of those, who bring as

Dominus dicendo poenitentiam agite, omnem vitam fidelium poenitentiam esse voluit. *Luther.*

2 Cor. 3. 18.

Nilq; putans factum, dum quod super esset agendum. Phil. 3. 13.

2 Pet. 2. 22.

Numb. 14. 37.

Jer. 2. 5.

Micah 6. 3.

&c.

Jer. 17. 13.

1 Joh. 2. 28.

as it were an evil report upon the Lord himself, and his ways, and make as if there was iniquity in him, and hence says the Lord, *what iniquity have your fathers found in me? &c.* and, *O my people what I have done to thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.* As if the Lord had said, you make as if I had done so and so unto you, but what have I done? plead the cause with me, what have you to lay to my charge, or object, speak and I will answer, I am willing to submit my ways to scanning, and to bring my proceedings with you to a tryal. For your better conviction put in your Bill of complaint against me, &c. O the wonderful condescension of the great God to poor sinners! as if he had said, Your own consciences, which I appeal to, cannot but say that I never dealt ill with you, but on the contrary well with you, for *I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of servants, &c.* and, *Have I been a wilderness to Israel, a land of darkness, &c.* O with what confusion will this fill the hearts of such another day? *All* (says the Prophet *Jeremy*) *that forsake thee shall be ashamed,* and therefore how good is it for us, as to draw neer to God, so to keep still with him, if we know when we are well: for whither should we go from him? *And now little children abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming.*

CHAP. XVI.

To prove God by turning unto him again.

AND let us now, by such a turning as this, but *prove God*, and see if he will not bless us, and do us good. There is indeed an unlawful proving of God, which is call'd a *tempting* of him, and forbidden; but this, of proving God, in doing our duty, and in returning to him, he puts his people upon. *Bring you* (says he) *all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it, &c. i. e.* Do you but return to me, as he exhorts them more generally *v. 7.* and do your duty, and try me therewith, if I will not bless and prosper you. And what wonderful condescension is here, that the great God, even the *Lord of Hosts*, should call upon such as we are, to *prove him*, to make as it were an experiment upon him, and, as if he should say, *Do it but this one year, and if it do, hold on; if not, afterwards do as you please.* O that the great God should condescend so low, as to deal with such as we are, in so familiar a way, as not onely to prescribe a remedy for our relief, but invite us withall to prove his goodness and faithfulness therein, and that with

Deut. 6. 16.

Mal. 3. 10.

Dignatio suspendenda.



Promissio con- with a kind of oath — *if I will not*, which is
firmatur jura- to be supplied with something else, as, *let me*
mento. *not else be believ'd hereafter, or I will not be*

Si non aperu- *God, &c.* with reverence be it spoken; and
ero, &c. non what admiration in the highest degree does this
ero deus, &c.

Pisc.

O immensam, all the Angels in Heaven forever admire and
& nullis nec adore this so wonderful condescension, that the
Angelorum great God should thus put himself upon the
nec hominum proof and tryal, and that by such as we are,
linguis satis and that with an oath, if he do not what he
deprædican- promises, if we do but what he commads: and
dam clemen- who indeed have ever thus prov'd him, and
tiam, O vero have not still found him merciful? yea, and
nos miseros, si faithful in his promise. The Lord appeals to
tantam dei *Jehoiakim*, as concerning the experience his
gratiam con- good father *Josiah*, upon tryal, had had of his
temnimus, ipsi goodnes and bounty upon his obedience of his
tergum obver- commands, causing it to be well with him, when
tentes, &c.

Winkelm. in lo-
cum.

Jer. 22. 15, 16. he did well: *Shalt thou reign* (says God) *be-
cause thou closest thy self in Cedar?* that is,
dost thou think (as the *Dutch* expound it) to
make thy Kingdom strong and lasting against
the threatnings of God, because of thy stately
and brave Cedar buildings. *Did not thy father
eat and drink*, that is, live quietly and comfor-
tably, and do judgment and justice, and then it
was well with him. v. 16. *He judg'd the cause
of the poor and needy, and then it was well with
him, &c.* As if God had said, I do appeal to
thee, was it not thus? and did he not thus prove
it to be? but v. 17. *Thine eyes and thine heart
are not but for thy covetousness, and but for to
shed*

shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence to do it. Sad, that the eyes and heart of so great a person should not be but for such things, no better employed! and how could such a one expect it should be well with him? So may God say, search the Scriptures, turn over those sacred Records, and see if you can find there any that ever turned to God, and it was not well with them, that ever truly repented, and repented that they repented, or were sorry that they turned from their sins to me, or with whom it was not far better with than before. O what exceeding joy, and wonderful sweet peace of conscience have they had upon their turning from their evil ways, that they would not have been without for a world! And here I might produce several instances, as concerning *Israel*, *Ephraim*, *Niniveh*, and others; so the prodigal; he upon coming to himself, resolves, by returning to his father, to prove his clemency, and how does he find it? exceeding great! for it is said, that when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, &c. And indeed never was there yet Nation, people, or person, that did prove God, so as unfeignedly to turn to him, but found him very gracious. Remember I pray thee (says *Eliphaz* to *Job*) who ever perished being innocent, or where were the righteous cut off? So who ever perished being truly penitent? or when, or where, was a returning sinner cut off? no, never any such finally perished, let any produce an instance if they can.

Luk. 15. 17;
18, 20. &c.

Job 4-7

Pfal. 18. 30.
— 12. 6.

The word of the Lord is tried, it is upon good proof found to be most true, without the least dross of deceit. And thus Jesus Christ is said to be a *tried stone*, i.e. upon tryal found most firm, and precious, fit and fully sufficient to bear up all that build upon him; and thus he is a *stone of proof*, as we say *armour of proof*, i.e. a stone throughly prov'd, that will certainly stay by, and stay up, all that by faith rest and rely upon him, amidst whatever storms may make head against them, and that while others fickle stays and refuges of lies, which they fondly relied on, are swept away. And thus God as to his goodness and faithfulness, which he manifests to such as truly turn to him, is a well tried and experienc'd God, and so will ever be, as hath been heard, so shall it be seen, and as it hath been told, so shall it be found, and much more. Indeed the Lord proves us, and that several ways, sometimes one way, sometimes another, sometimes with health and prosperity, and sometimes with sickness and adversity, &c. But what pitiful sorry creatures do we upon tryal shew our selves to be? and how much do we fail his expectations, and what he promises to himself concerning us? so as that he is even at a stand with us, and knows not what (as it were) to do to us, as he says of Ephraim, *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? &c. for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away, &c. Hos. 6. 4.* A most pathetical expostulation, as if the Lord had said, I have several ways try'd you, and made several assays upon you, some-

Quasi dicat,
omnia tentavi
media, sed lusi
oleum, & ope-
ram, nec bonis
nec malis estis
curabiles, &c.
Pavens.

sometimes one way, and sometimes another; sometimes by my word, and sometimes with my rod; one while prospering you, another while afflicting you, &c. and after all I profess I am even at a stand concerning you, and you shew your selves such, as that I know not what to do to you. Your goodness, if any, what is it? *but as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away, it is but a meer flash, an outside, sickle, unconstant nothing,* and you unsteady and deceitful. So it is said of the Israelites, that the Lord led them forty years in the wilderness to *Deut. 8. 2.* prove them, and to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no: and what upon proof did he find them, even an awker'd, untoward, perverse people? they gave God indeed good words, made him fair promises, *spake well,* but acted ill, and quite contrary to what they pretended. God said indeed, *Surely they are my people children that will not lye, so he was their Saviour, &c. But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, &c. When Jeru-
salem waxed fat, then he kicked, and when lean, he murmured.* It is said, God left Hezekiah to try him, to know all that was in his heart, and how much pride, and vain glory, and ingratitude was there found there? God many times lays us low, and what large promises do we make, if he will but restore us, which many times the Lord does; but what false deceitful creatures do we shew our selves! and so we think, if we had but such and such mercies, how would we improve them: but it is quite other-

—§. 27, 28.

II. 63. 8, 9, 10.

Deut. 32. 15.

2 Chr. 32. 31.

Job 4. 5. 6.

Psal. 62. 9.

Sensusest, si ho-
mines pone-
rentur in una
lance bilancis,
vanitas verò in
altera, tum
comperiren-
tur leviores
esse quam vani-
tas. *Pisc.*

Josh. 23. 14.

1 King. 3. 6.

Psal. 119. 65.

wise upon tryal, so before affliction comes, we think many times we have a good measure of *faith and patience, and christian courage, and submissiveness to the will of God*; but upon proof how little does it appear to be? *But now it is come upon thee and thou faintest, it toucheth thee and thou art troubled, &c.* thus surely men of low degree are *vanity*, and men of high degree are a *lye*, to be laid or being laid in the ballance: that is, put to the tryal, they are altogether lighter than vanity, *i. e.* vanity being laid in one scale, and all they together in the other, vanity would yet outweigh them, and be found weightier than the weightiest of them. By a *lye* we are to understand false and deceitful; and as men of high and low degree comprehend all sorts of men, so vanity and a lie, all sorts of deceitfulness and uncertainty. But God now, he upon proof is ever found what his Word declares, and what he promises to be; yea, such as make proof of him, find him to be better, and more than what they expected him to be. *Joshua* when he was now going the way of all the earth, he appeals to all *Israel*, that not one thing had failed of all the good things God had promised, all came to pass, and not one thing failed thereof. And *Solomon* declares, as concerning his father *David*, that God had shewed him great mercy, and kept for him great kindness, according as he walked before him in truth and in righteousness, &c. and *David* himself says, thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word. And O that *England*, that we of this Nation, would at length

length, by true conversion, but *prove God*, and see but what would be the effect and issue thereof, if he would not bless us, and cause it to be well with us; we have tryed others, and other ways, and upon proof found them vain and ineffectual. O that at length we would but try here, if not for our own sakes, yet for the sake of the Nation, or at least of our *little ones*; if we have no regard to our selves, nor any other, yet at least let us have respect to them, that they may be saved, which are or should be so dear to us, and which we especially should seek the good of, because while so little they cannot seek it themselves, and that when we have served the Lord in our generation, they may continue after us to stand up in our stead. These *Ezra* had a special regard to, in that *fast* he proclaim'd at the river *Abara*, it was to seek of him a right way for them, and their little ones: Yea what a singular respect hath God himself to such, how have his bowels even yern'd towards them, and shall not ours? you know what he said to *Jonah*, *And should not I spare Niniveh that great City, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand & their left*, that is, young children and infants. And shall not Parents have a tender respect to such? can ye indure to see the evil else that is like to come upon them? do but read, and seriously weigh what the want of turning to God hath brought upon others little ones*, and shall this move us nothing? O that something or other might prevail but to try! what not

Ezr. 8. 21.
Domino par-
vuli maximæ
curæ sunt, nec
dubium Deum
sepîus ur.ibus
maximis pa-
cere, propter
multitudinem
infantium, &c.
Winck in loc.

*Lam. 2. 11.
—4. 10.
Hos. 13. 16.
Ezek. 9. 6.

try what is purpos'd for our own weal ! why ? the Lord you see is pleas'd to put himself to the tryal, *prove me*, and shall we refuse, when as never yet any prov'd him thus in vain ? O did we but truly and unfeignedly repent and *turn to God*, we should then see what was the power and prevalency thereof, and we should meet with such proofs of God's favour and goodness, as would fully convince us that all the while we refus'd to do it, *we forsook our own mercy*, and from that very day *would the Lord bless us* : and let us all set our selves to this, as belonging to all, and as being the concern of all, both old and young, high and low, rich and poor, great and mean, noble and ignoble, for are we not all turn'd away from God ? and is it not every ones concern to live and be happy, and be sav'd ? or is it onely poor and mean ones concern ? and besides, *with God there is no respect of persons*, but he being the absolute and soveraign Lord over all, all are alike bound to own his authority, and obey his commands, of which this is one of the chief, — *but now commandeth all men every where to repent*, and such by reason of God's bounty have greater obligation to this duty than others, so as to be exemplary, else the greater is their sin, and the greater will be their punishment, and death will shortly level all ; so that though now there be difference of men as to these things here, as there is (as one well expressees it) of Counters while the Merchants account lasterth, some standing for *pence*, some *pounds*, some *hundreds*, some *thousands* ; and so of *Players*, while
on

Hag. 2. 12.

Rom. 2. 11.

1 Pet. 1. 17.

Act. 17. 30.

Majora bene-
ficia, majora
flagitia, majora
supplicia.

on the Stage, some going for *rich*, some for *poor*, some for *Princes*, some for *Peasants*, &c. and so of *Trees*, while growing in the Forrest, some being *Oaks*, some *Elms*, some *Brambles*, &c. yet when the account is over, the play ended, the trees cut down, especially burnt to ashes, there will be no difference at all, no more will there be after death, and when all shall appear before God, &c. And therefore how should all attend this, and apply themselves to it to their utmost? Christ says, *be zealous and repent*, and surely Rev. 3. 19. had we any zeal for our own and the Nation's good, we would repent: and O that *England* unfeignedly repenting and turning to God, might at length become an example and monument of God's goodness to all such as shall do so, both to the Nations abroad, & to the generations yet to come at home, that so all, in *England*, might see how gracious the Lord is to such; and we might have cause to make our boast of him, Lo this is our God, we have return'd to him, and he hath *sav'd us*, and *we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation*; and let others come, and do as we have done, and they shall prove God to be the same in his goodness as we have, that whereas it was said before, Go to *London*, as sometimes to *Shiloh*, and see what I did for the wickedness thereof, what a sweeping *plague*, and after that a dreadful *fire* I sent among them; so it may be said now, Go and see, upon their turning again unto me, what my *goodness* hath been to them, and what *blessings* I have multiplied upon them, and how graciously I have turn'd to them. Jer. 7. 12.

Deut. 29. 18,
19, 20. &c.

Jer. 23. 33. &c.

Mal. 1. 4.

Proigne. Inn.
Pisc. &c.

truly but in such a way to expect God's goodness, it is but to tempt him, yea to provoke him, and how dreadfully does the Lord express himself against such! when a sinner shall bless himself in his heart, and say, he shall have peace, though he walk in the imagination of his heart, to aide drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare such a one, but his anger shall smook against him, and all the curses in God's book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven, &c. And if we in stead of turning to God, shall, by going on in our sins, still provoke him, what can we expect, but that his soul should loath us, and that he should even utterly forsake us, and cast us out of his presence, which he threatens as the *forest burden*; and though we build statelier and fairer houses, that he should say of us, as sometimes of *Edom*, *They shall build, but I will throw down*, &c. and they shall labour but for the fire, as some render that *Hab. 2. 13. Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts, that the people shall labour in the very fire, or for the fire*; so that what they build shall be consumed by the fire: and hath it not been so as concerning some houses already? and was it not of the *Lord of hosts*, by his determinate counsel, and as an act of his righteous judgment, that when so famous a City was on fire, they who laboured to quench it, laboured in that sense but as it were in the fire, that is, to no purpose, and wearied themselves for very vanity. And if we shall still persist in our sins, how justly may we fear that all that is reedified may be but for the fire

fire again, or that some heavier judgment may yet befall us, which may reach not onely to our houses and estates, but our very limbs and lives. But if we shall indeed *turn again to God*, and he be pleased but to *cause his face to shine*, what a famous renowned City may we not yet then expect to see, even a City *sought out*, or sought to, or after, that is, exceeding desirable, and not forsaken; and not only a safe but a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, &c. when it shall become a City of truth and righteousness, a faithful City, and righteousness lodge in the midst thereof, and holiness written upon it to the Lord; then shall that song be sung indeed, *we have a strong City*, Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks, &c, yea then will he own it, as his rest, and his rest shall be glorious, and upon all the glory shall be a defence, and there is a river, the streams whereof shall then make it glad, even the special gracious protecting presence of the most High; and whereas it was said before *this is the City to be visited*, that is, with woes and plagues, now it shall be said, this is the City to be blessed, to be honoured, to be visited, but with loving kindness and tender mercies; and then shall glory dwell in our land, and the Lord shall give that which is good, and mercy and truth shall meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other; yea mercy shall surely then (as the Psalmist expresses it) be built up forever, that is, remain and abide upon us, and ours, forever, one pile of mercy, as it were, upon another,

Isa. 62. 12.

— 26. 1.

— 11. 10.
Psal. 46. 4.

— 85. 9. &c.

— 89. 2.

till

till the building be compleated, till it reach to heaven, to that *building of God, that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens*. Thus the work of mercy being begun, shall be carried on, as when the foundation of some famous structure, is laid by some able skilful artificer, to which it seems an illusion, so will God not leave this blessed pile half finnish'd, but perfect and compleat the same. Thus we have built up houses, but then God himself *will build up mercy*, and that shall uphold us and our houses, and *England* shall be set as a pattern of blessing and blessings, as is said of *David*, *For thou hast made him most blessed for ever*: the Hebrew is, — *set him blessings*, i. e. as some, beset him with blessings; as *Psal.* 5. 12. & 32. 10. *replenished him*, &c. or, as others, *put him to be blessings*, that is, to impart them, or to be a *blessing*, as is said of *Abraham*, and others, *Gen.* 12. 2. *Is.* 19. 24. *Ezek.* 34. 26. &c. or rather, as others, to be an example of blessing, and blessings, that is, so blessed and replenished with blessings, as to become worthily an example to others thereof. And so shall *England* become, upon *its return to God*: as it is said of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, *In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim*, &c. so, as *England*; the Lord bless thee as he hath blessed his people there, (whereas others have been an example of God's curse, as *Zedekiah* and *Ahab*, *The Lord make thee as Zedekiah*, &c.) and then from that very time that we do indeed *turn again to God*, and are reform'd, the name of

Psal. 21. 6.

כִּתְּשׁוּתָהּ
בְּרוּכָה Pones
cum benedi-
ones. Hac lo-
quendi formu-
lâ exprimitur
tam uberem
bonorum co-
piam affluere
ei, ut merito
benevolentie
divinæ exem-
plar esse possit,
&c. *Calv.*
Gen. 48. 20.
Jer. 29. 22.

of the City, and Countrey too, shall be the name of that City, *Ezek. 48. 35.* as that wherein our chief good and happiness shall consist, *Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there.*

CHAP. XVII.

Motives to seek the face or favour of God.

CONSIDER 1. *how excellent it is*, so as *David* admires it. *How excellent is thy loving kindness O God, &c.* It cannot be exprest, what is there in heaven it self that exceeds it, *whom have I in heaven but thee? And they shall see his face, &c.* Life is precious, the preciouslest thing in Nature; but the favour of God, as has been hinted, is *more precious*, it is *life* even in death it self, as that blessed Martyr *Mr. Bradford* answered, when profer'd life, if he would recant, *Life (said he) with God's displeasure is worse than death, and death in his favour is true life.* Psal. 36. 7.
—73. 25.
Rev. 22. 4.
Psal. 63. 3.

2. How honourable, what indeed more honours? *Since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable.* From that very time that a soul finds favour with God, you may write it down as happy, so truly honourable, but there is no true honour 'till then, it being God alone, and his favour, and grace, that creates that; this, as I hinted before, is the *crowning mercy*, — *with favour wilt thou crown him.* It is observed of *the Rainbow*, that of it self it is but a common vapour, II. 43. 4.
Psal. 5. 12.

vapour, but that which gilds it, and as it were enamels it with so many radiant colours, it is the Sun, by shining upon it; and so all the gildings, all the beauty, glory, and lustre that is upon any, it is from the shines of God's face, from the beams of his favour and grace, and without this, *man, though in honour, is yet but vile, and like the beasts that perish. — And the earth shined with his glory.* It is the grace and favour of God, (which he counts his *glory*,) that makes to shine such lumps of earth as we are. It is spoken as the great honour of the *seven Princes of Persia, and Media*, that were next to the King, that they *saw his face*; those *Persian Monarchs* were seldom seen of any, it was a piece of state they took upon themselves: and if it was so much honour to see the face of an earthly Monarch, what honour is it to behold the face of God! *As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness.* This is that badg of honour that differences the Saints from all others, and is not onely the happiness, but glory of heaven it self, and of those Angels and blessed Heroes that reside there. *I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God: and, I say unto you, that in heaven the Angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven.* This is spoken of as the greatest honour the creature can be advanced to in heaven, and what greater honour then can there be on earth?

3. *How comfortable*, nothing comforts like it, nor any thing, truly, without it. Its *better than wine*, yea turns even water into wine, it giveth

giveth songs in the night, and in the grossest darkness causeth to arise light; and this alone in all troubles is the choicest cordial, no Bezoar, Pearl, Alkermes, nor other cordial, can comfort like it: hence the Prophet *David*, a man inspired by God, of all cordials, makes choice of this, *Let I pray thee thy merciful kindness be for my comfort &c.* or, let it be for to comfort me: where should it be? O let it be by me, let it be with me, as my cordial, to cheer and revive me. Such as are subject to faint, use to have their cordials by them, now Lord, says *David*, let me have this, and none indeed to this; this was it made *Oecolampadius*, when he was near death, putting his hand upon his heart, to say *hic sat lucis*, here is abundance of light, that is, of unspeakable joy; and Mr. *Bolton*, I am by the wonderful mercies of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold; and another to cry out, *O the joy, the unspeakable joy* I find in my soul; and another, my cup runs over, &c. this will comfort, when other the choicest cordials cannot, nor will not, and that in the most disconsolate estate, but nothing in times of distress can comfort without it, because nothing can supply the want of it. It is said, *In the light of the Kings countenance is life, and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain, and as dew upon the grass*: and what then is the light of Gods countenance? his favour? how much more comfortable and refreshing must that needs be? — *Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.* O one cast of that is more comforting,

Ps. 119. 76.

Ad consolandum me.

Ostendit nihil esse quod dolorem abstergat, donec propitium sibi Deum sentiat. Calvin.

ting than the wealth of a whole world. When Cyrus had once given a cup of Gold to one, and a Kiss, in token of special favour, to another, he to whom the King had given the Cup, told him, that the Cup he gave him was not so good gold as the Kiss he gave to the other, &c.

4. *How profitable*; nothing makes more for our profit, it being the main, and that which is the very root and well-spring of all good: but of this I have occasionally spoken something before, and shall be the briefer therefore now: what will or can God withhold from those he loves? Surely, those his heart is set upon, his hand cannot but be open to. *Pf. 84. 11. The Lord God is a Sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*: and why not from them? why is his hand so open to them? because they have his heart, the Lord loves them, his countenance beholds them. *Pf. 85. 1. Lord, thou hast been favourable to thy land, (says the Psalmist) and what then? thou hast brought back their captivity, forgiven their iniquity, covered their sin, taken away thy wrath, &c. The father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. — I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life, &c. Moses had asked very much of God, and yet goes on to ask more. And what says the Lord? I will (says he) do this thing also that thou hast spoken. As if the Lord had said, I can indeed deny thee nothing, I have done (it is true) much already, but I will do this also: why?*

Joh. 3. 35.
If. 43. 4.

Exod. 33. 16.

v. 17.

why? for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name, that is, I have taken special and particular notice of thee, and thy name, as one whom I singularly favour, and I will make all my goodness pass before thee, &c. O

v. 19.

what will not God do for. such! Hence Moses often makes use of this argument, if I have found grace in thy sight, &c. The favour of God is all good, every mercy radically; as the displeasure of God is every judgment: that is, it is productive of all good, of each mercy: when a soul has this good, which is the chief good, it has that good from which all others spring, and therefore may write under it, and cut out from it, any other whatsoever, all particular mercies and goods being but the favour of God, as it were specified, and brought as it were into this or that particular mercy or good; so that such a soul may say of all its other mercies and goods, this, and that, and the other is the favour of God. So that the Soul that has it, has all good, all mercies, in the fountain, and root, and well-spring of them; it has that which produces and procures all good, and remedies all evils. Hence says the Angel to Mary, Fear not Mary, for thou hast found favour with God; there is no cause why such a soul should fear, either the want of any good, or the feeling of any evil, the favour of God being as a Sun in reference to the one, so as a shield in reference to the other, and so every way sufficient.

Exod. 33. 13.

—34. 9.

Luk. 1. 30.

5. *How necessary*; it is indeed the one thing needful? is life necessary? this is life, yea better

ter

Hos. 6. 3.

ter than life, and all true life is so much in it, that a Soul is but dead without it, it being more the life of the soul, than the soul is of the body. The Sun is not so necessary to the world, rain to the earth, as the favour of God to the soul, the displays whereof are *as the morning, and as the rain, the former and the latter rain unto the earth.* Is to be happy necessary? the favour of God is our happiness; and look as we cannot but be happy with it, whatever our state otherwise is, so we cannot but be miserable without it. As it cannot but be day when the Sun riseth, though the Stars disappear, but it cannot but be night though they do appear if the Sun be set; so it is as to the displayings or withdrawals of God's face and favour.

Herbert.

—Thine absence was my hell,
And now thou art returned, I am well.

And hence for this cause the Angel salutes Mary as being blessed, because highly favoured. *Luk. 1. 28. Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women.* In a word, if to be truly happy, so far as we are capable here, and to be fully happy hereafter be necessary, then this is so, as that wherein consists both happiness in its initiation here, and in its full consummation in heaven.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

To endeavour the Conversion of others.

THere is onely one thing further I have to adde, and then I shall conclude: *viz.* that this *turning again* being of such infinite concern unto all, that being turn'd again our selves, we would indeavour our utmost, to be instrumental therein to others: and the rather, that thereby we may shew our gratitude, for God's vouchsafing so great a favour to us. And truly, next to the conversion and salvation of our own souls, we cannot busie our selves to better purpose, not onely as to their, and our own comfort and benefit, but the good of the whole; so that this is every ones concern: for as *one sinner*, still going on in his sins, may much hinder, so one sinner being turn'd again may much further the good of the whole. And who knows, whether one or a few sinners more being turn'd again, may not help to make up that number, which being found, God may be pleas'd for their sakes to spare the whole? But the great argument I shall chiefly make use of at present, is that of the Apostle *James*, which is somewhat the same indeed with that in the Text, but more amplified, *Brethren, if any of you do erre from the truth, i.e. in opinion, or practice, in faith or manners, and one convert him, that is, prove instrumental* Eccl. 9. 18.
Gen. 18. 32.

Z therein;

Verbum servandi ad homines transferatur, non quod autores sint salutis, sed Ministri. Calvin. 1 Pet. 2.

Animam per Synecdochen, & κατ' ἐξοχὴν, neque enim à salute excluditur corpus. Pisc. Job 30. 15.

Ps. 22. 20.

therein, making use of all ways and means subservient thereunto; and here that is ascrib'd to the instrument and means, which is properly God's work, because God in and by those means works, and conveys a blessing: *And any one, &c.* for this work is not limited to Ministers onely, but belongs to others in their places, and stations, yea to all, who some way or other may be helpful therein. The Apostle *Peter* speaks of *husbands being won by the conversation of their wives*, now here's the duty, and then follows the dignity and commodity, v. 20. *Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* What weight is there here in every word? even such as may quicken our desires, and raise our endeavours to the highest pitch; and it is observable, that with this golden sentence the Apostle shuts up his whole Epistle, there being no work as more excellent in it self, so more acceptable to God, nor profitable to our selves nor others, for whoever is instrumental therein. 1. *He shall save*, and that's a good work, *Jesus Christ* came to save. 2. *A soul*, not an estate, or life, though it is somewhat to save them, but a *soul*; indeed the body's sav'd too, but the soul as chief is specified onely. A soul, that is the *main*, and indeed the *man*, the jewel, call'd our principal one, *They pursue my soul*, in the Hebrew it is, as you may see in the Margin, *my principal one*, so call'd for its preheminance; *Dutch* read it, *my Noble*; others *Priceless*, or excellent one; *David* calls it his *darling*,

a soul which is so precious, more worth than a world, and which Jesus Christ himself set so high a value upon, as to lay down his life, to save, and which if a man should lose, it would profit him nothing, though he should gain the whole world, as Jesus Christ, who best knew the worth of Souls, hath declar'd, and which being once lost is irrecoverable, for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? O nothing can be given here, though it was many worlds, so as to avail any thing; for as the loss of the soul is incomparable, so it is irreparable. A soul, which being safe all's safe, and for the salvation of one of which, there is joy among all the Angels in heaven. 3. A soul from death, that is, eternal death, the second death, and this is death indeed, in comparison of which the other death, viz. temporal, deserves not the name of death. 4. Hide a multitude of sins. Some refer this to his sins that converts, God being very gracious to such a one, &c. But others, (and better) to the sinner converted; for he being instrumental of his conversion, proves so also of the covering, or pardoning of his sins, so as not to condemn or hurt him, which is indeed man's blessedness, and a very glorious priviledg, as was hinted before: and what a blessed thing is it to be instrumental herein, in covering anothers sins, yea multitudes! Certainly this is more than if a man could be instrumental to another of compassing for him an whole world, and to get one of such debts discharged towards God, is more than ten thousand Talents unto man; and

Math. 16.26.

Luk. 15. 10.

ἐν Σαυᾶ τοῦ αἰ-
ωνίς. Πίστ.Efficiet ut Deus
teget, &c. igitur
noscit enim
resipiscen-
tibus, etiam si
plurima gra-
vissimaque pec-
cata admiserit.

let him now that *converts a sinner from the error of his way* know, yea and consider this, to his comfort, and to his own and others encouragement, in so good a work, and so as to give glory to God, for putting so great honour and dignity upon him; and who would not lay out their utmost endeavours here, to *save*, and to save a *soul*, and from *death*, yea eternal death, and to *cover sin*, yea a *multitude of sins*? But the more yet to engage in so good a work, consider we,

1. *Jesus Christ died to save souls*, and shall not we contribute our utmost endeavours? &c.

2. *Others seek to pervert*, yea subvert and destroy souls, and not we to convert and save them? are they factours for the Devil, and Hell, and not we for God and Heaven? &c.

3. *This is one great end of God's converting us*, and of giving us his Spirit, it is to further the conversion of others: *the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall*, that is, others, for their good and benefit, and not to be idle, but to be made use of for common service. Christ says to *Peter*, and when thou art converted, *strengthen thy brethren*; and he himself being *anointed with the holy Ghost*, it is said, *he went up and down doing good*; and so should we, and not *receive the grace of God in vain*, nor have Talents, to *keep them laid up in a napkin*. I have read of an old man, who being converted himself, was so zealous and industrious this way, that *he brought above forty to seek out for heaven*, that before had no

more

Ut Ecclesia inde fructum percipiat. *Calv.*
1 Cor. 12. 7.

Link. 22. 32.
Acts 10. 38.

Paulum sepulcræ, distat incertis, celata virtus. *Horat.*

more care that way, then as if they had been a company of beasts, and this is indeed divine labour, heavenly travel, blessed employment indeed, to convert souls, &c.

4. *This it is an high honour*, yea the highest, to be instrumental in so blessed a work, herein we are workers together with God, and joyn in fellowship with him, and what an honour is that? certainly it is a more glorious and honourable exploit to convert souls, than to subdue Countreys and Kingdomes, vanquish Nations, yea than to exercise the vastest Dominions. To rescue a soul from eternal death, there is nothing (says Calvin) more honourable, more desirable. We see how much Christ values giving but meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, but how much more precious to him is the salvation of the soul, than the life of the body.

Nihil prastantius, aut magis optabile, quam animam eripere ex morte aeterna, &c.

5. *It is a point of great wisdom*, yea of the greatest, *He that winneth souls is wise*, that wins them to God and his ways. I, he is a wise man indeed, truly wise, greatly wise, write him down as so, for he approves, and makes it appear he is so indeed; it is as if Solomon had said, There is a great deal of talk of wise men in the world, but when all is said as can be said, he is the wise man that wins souls, not he that wins the world, or wins so much wealth, as the world thinks, but souls, because they are so precious; one soul being more worth than a world, yea many worlds, and therefore it is greater wisdom to win a soul, than a world, and had Paul won but one soul, he had therein approv'd himself wiser

Prov. 11. 30.

Ecclef. 8. 1.

Job 28. 17, 18.
&c.

Vera benevo-
lentia, maxime
in mutuâ salu-
tis curâ, confi-
stit; amorem
vult ei, qui a-
matur, omne
bonum, maxi-
mè salutem.
Parens.

Rom. 10. 1.

Prov. 4. 3, 4, 5.
&c.

in winning that one soul, than *Alexander the Great* in conquering the *whole world*, yea had it been many worlds This is the wisdom that makes the face to shine here, and such shall *shine forth as the Sun* for ever hereafter; and of this wisdom may we say, *The Gold and the Cristal cannot equal it, &c. and the price of it is above Rubies, &c.*

6. *It is an evidence of sincere love*; and indeed there cannot be a greater, nor clearer. Who ever truly loves another, he ever undoubtedly aims at, and indeavours his good, and especially his chiefest good, and what can that be but his *conversion and salvation*? and as ever therefore we would manifest the sincerity of our love to others, it must be by endeavouring, by all possible ways and means, their *conversion*, and so their *salvation*. Thus *Paul* made appear the sincerity of his love to *Israel*, his *heart's desire* and prayer to God for *Israel* being this, *that they might be saved*. And so *David* to his son *Solomon*, he tells us he was *his father's son*, so were others, but he in a special manner was so, being singularly loved, and of such a one we use to say, *he is his father's son*; and how did he manifest the truth of his love? why, *he taught me also, and said unto me, let thy heart retain my words, &c. Get wisdom, get understanding, &c.* And we can never approve our selves sincerely to love others, but in this way, for if to love be to desire and endeavour the good of those we love, how can it consist with the neglect of their *chiefest good*? And that this is to love, a very
Hea-

Heathen saw; *To love* (says he) *is to desire good things for those whom we love, and according to our utmost ability to endeavour to accomplish them*; and what good things, to conversion and salvation? and therefore while we neglect these, we do but indeed hate, whom we may pretend to love. Many Parents they think they love their children; why? because they cocker their children, and provide well for them as to the world, and allow them *high fare, and fine cloaths*, and it may be, can tumble in silver and gold, but such in the mean while, neglecting their souls, and the means appointed by God for their conversion, and salvation, they shew plainly they do not in truth love them, but rather hate them, and so will be found and accounted of at the last day. And how well may such children say to their Parents, what *Delilah* sometimes said to *Sampson*, in another case, *How can ye say ye love us*? when your hearts desires and prayers are no more to God for us, that we may be converted and sav'd? when you neglect our souls, our jewel, our *darling*, our *principal one*, and take no more care of our chief good, our spiritual and eternal good, of that, which if we should fall short of, it would avail us nothing, though you should all your days gather Pearls for us, or could procure the gain of a whole world for us. The Lord commands, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart*; and how is this prevented? *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him*; so that not to rebuke, not to use those ways and means ap-

Βέλεσθαι ἀγα-
θά καὶ τοῦ χρί-
στου, καὶ πρὸς
ἀριστ.

Peremptores
potius quam
parentes.

Jud. 16. 15.

Levit. 19. 17.

pointed by God, for to reclaim and reduce thy brother when he sinneth, is to *hate him*, for thereby the guilt of his sin is still suffer'd to be upon him, to his soul's ruine, which to suffer, as it is hatred in thee, so the forest judgment upon thy brother.

Rom. 3. 12.
Ezek. 15. 4. 5.

Jer. 13. 10.
Matth. 5. 13.

Omnis vita
infidelium pec-
catum.

Philem. 10.
11.

ἀνάνιος, dicit
nunc ταιμένη
plane, qualis
vocatur.

Exod. 23. 4.
Deut. 22. 4.

7. Consider *others unserviceableness* till they be converted, they are altogether unprofitable, like that *Vine branch* in *Ezekiel* that was *meet for no work*, and that *girdle* hid in *Euphrates*, that was *good for nothing*; and like *Salt* which has lost its savour, and is fit for nothing *but to be cast out and troden under foot*. And should we not do our utmost to get others out of such an estate, that is so unprofitable? wherein they neither can please God, nor truly profit themselves or others, wherein all their works even their best, are but *dead works*, and their whole life *sin*; and is this an estate to let them lie in, to let them alone in? God forbid. That's very observable to this purpose which **Paul** says of *Onesimus*, viz. that *in time past*, i. e. all the while, before his conversion, *he was unprofitable*, but after his conversion then *profitable*, profitable to *Philemon*, yea to *Paul* himself, before profitable to none, neither to himself nor others, but now to *all*, to master and Minister, and now he answers his name, which he never did before, to which the Apostle seems to allude.

8. *Beasts if fallen, or strayed*, and so in danger to perish, were to be help'd and reduc'd, and not men? not souls? does God take care of beasts, would he have us keep them from perishing,

ing, and not much more *men*? *souls*? but shall we let them alone in the errours of their minds, and in the corrupt practices of their lives? to stand or fall, sink or swim, live or dye, no matter what? what *uncharitableness*, *cruelty*, and *hard-heartedness* would this argue? &c. and therefore upon all these considerations, let us lay out our selves to the utmost, as to so good and blessed a work, making use of all possible ways and means as may further the same, as *instructions*, *exhortations*, *admonitions*, *reprehensions*, *exemplary conversations*, &c. and with, and to all, let us be sure to joyn our *feruent prayers* and earnest supplications, for unless the Lord comes in with his help, and makes successful what we do, what can it avail: *if the Lord help not*, as that King said to the woman, *how should we help? God shall perswade Japhet*, &c. — *It is of God that sheweth mercy* — and — *as God gave to every man*: else had we the wisdom of Angels, what would it avail without God? and therefore we must address our selves to the most High, and cry unto him, who as he hath performed this for us, can also for others; but of this I have occasionally spoken something before, and therefore shall not enlarge here; and as we should endeavour this unto all, as occasion serves, so more especially to our relations, and those whose good, we have stronger obligations upon us, than ordinary, for to seek, as we who are Ministers (whose proper work in a more special manner it is) in reference to our people, and so *Parents* in reference

2 Kings 6. 27.

Gen. 9. 27.

Rom. 9. 16.

ference to their children, and all relations in reference to each other; yea, if children be converted themselves, and their Parents as yet unconverted, they should in a special manner endeavour their conversion, onely what they do they are to do in an humble way, and to manage it after a reverent manner, as befits that honour that is due to Parents from their children. It is controverted by some, whether children may not be instrumental of greater benefit to their Parents, than they have receiv'd from them? and certainly if they prove instrumental, as to their conversion, they may; for to be instrumental of regeneration, and a spiritual birth, is far better than of generation, and a natural birth; and to be instrumental to an happy, glorious, and eternal life, than to a miserable, mortal, and momentary life, and therefore all should do their utmost herein; and what the Church of the Jews said of the Church of the Gentiles before their calling, that should we say of our relations, *We have flesh and such relations* as are not as yet turn'd to God, nor brought home to him, *what shall we do for them, it grieves us much for their sakes*, because of the state they are as yet in, what shall we do to get them out of it? let us contribute even all we can, to our utmost, as to their conversion. The Israelites were Paul's brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, and what great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart had he for them? and how earnest was he for the conversion of them? *My hearts desire* (says he) *and prayer to God for Israel*

Cant. 8. 8.

Rom. 9. 13. 3.

—10. 1.

rael is, that they might be saved, that his natural relations might become spiritual, and those so near in nature, and bonds of *consanguinity*, might be so in grace, and bonds of *sanctity*; that they might be happy, as well as himself: it was not that *Israel* might become great in the world, or have plenty and prosperity in their streets, or have the Kingdom restor'd to them from the *Romans*, but that they might be converted and saved, for this it is his soul travels, and is so exceeding solicitous. The word we render, *desire*, is very emphatical, and notes a marvelous *strong intention of spirit*, and *solicitude of soul*, together with a *complacency* therein, and an *earnest study* for the accomplishment thereof. His soul (as he elsewhere expresses it) did greatly even long after them all in the bowels of *Jesus Christ*; and so should ours after the conversion and salvation of others, especially our relations, and what the Apostle says of husbands and wives, that we may say of others, *And what know'st thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband; or how know'st thou O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? So, what know'st thou O father, or mother, whether thou shalt save thy child? &c.* There's hope thereof, if we be not wanting therein, and what we do here to relations or others, we should take care to do it wisely, having respect to the different state of those with whom we have to deal, and accordingly dealing with them: as the Apostle *Jude* exhorts, *And of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* As if the

Apostle

Salutem eorum mirum in modum expetere testatur, & pro ea sedulo ad Deum vota facit.

ἐν-δυνάμει τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας.

Phil. 1. 8.

1 Cor. 7. 16.

Jude 22. 23.

Commiseramini, i. e. ex
misericordia
reprehendite,
& officii admo-
nete humani-
ter, &c.

in psal. i. dicit
psal. hoc est,
terrando eos
per denuncia-
tionem iudicii
Dei, nisi resipi-
verint. Pise.

2 Cor. 5. 11.
Math. 3. 7.

Jam. 3. 6.

Asperitatem
necessitas ex-
cusat, quod ali-
ter servari ne-
queant.

Apostle had said, you have to deal with several sorts, some are weak, others wilful, some pliable, others refractory, and accordingly deal, as each ones temper requires, either with mildness, or more sharpness, so as any way to win them, with gentler means, or more severe; *and others save with fear*, that is, say some, lest their precious souls should everlastingly miscarry, more worth than whole worlds; or rather, this fear may respect the way and manner of saving them, as if the Apostle had said, save them any ways, though never so severe, get them to heaven though by the gates of hell. O, *souls are so precious*, and *hell so terrible*, that no way or course here, that God or man can take, can be too severe; so that to save here *with fear*, is as much as by fears, that is, by frightening them, by making them afraid, by setting before them the *terrors of the Lord*; and telling them of the *wrath to come*, by denouncing God's fearful judgments against them, if still they go on in their sins, and shewing them how that there is but a step between them and hell, &c. *pulling them out of the fire*. Sinners who still persist impenitently in their sins, are as it were in the fire, being *set on fire of hell*, and as it were in the suburbs of eternal fire, and therefore says the Apostle, *pull* or *snatch* them out. Such are not easily or gently to be dealt with, but hastily and violently to be pull'd out, as a man would do one that is in the fire; and what does he do in such a case? does he stand to beckon to him with his finger? or leisurely to hold forth to him his hand?

hand? no, his present danger calls to him, to act at another rate, and after a more speedy and forcible manner, even with that violence, as it may be to pluck an arm, or other limb out of joynt. Why, it is to save life, and the person will be *burn'd* else, and therefore he uses in such a case the greatest violence; and so should we with those, who will not otherwise be won: so that *pulling* out of the fire, may be understood here, as men use to pull out of the fire. And thus the Apostle *James* laboured to save wicked and refractory rich men. *Jam.* 5. 1, 2. &c. and *John* the Baptist, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* that generation of *Vipers*, *Matth.* 3. 7. and the *Cretians* being fierce and refractory sinners, thus *Paul* bids *Titus* to indeavour to save them, *Rebuke them* (says he) *sharply*, or severely, the Greek is *cuttingly*, or to the quick, it seems an allusion to Chirurgeons, who to cure the wound cut to the quick. Thus considering the disposition of the offender, and the quality of the offence, some offending of *weakness*, others of *wilfulness*, we are accordingly with wisdom and discretion for to deal; more gently with some, and more roundly and roughly with others, still in all making God's glory, and their conversion and salvation, our main end and drift. And though we should meet with many discouragements, it may be with mocks, and scoffs, in the faithful discharge of this our duty, yet let us not matter it, but remember we work for *souls*, and for their *conversion* and *salvation*; and the gaining of one soul is more and better than the *gaining*
of

Eleganti utitur
Metaphorâ,
nam ubi est incendii periculum, violenter capere non dubitamus.
Calv. in loc.
Titus 1. 13.
Serius, severe & acriter, vel præcisè.
Gall. Vive-
ment.

of whole Kingdoms and Empires; and though we should not see that fruit we so much desire, and endeavour for, yet doing our duty, let this comfort us, that our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God.

II. 49. 4.

The Conclusion of the whole.

AND thus I have now, *through the good assisting hand of God upon me, (to whom for ever be the praise) finished my Discourse of these words, words of as great weight and importance as possibly can be imagined; words, as I said at first, so seasonable, and so sovereign, for they do contain in them, the very platform of a peoples or a person's weal, and their onely true and right way of being saved. And O that now the Lord would bring us into this way! which, if yet he hath any delight in us, he will; and which that he may, I have onely two things to request, and I have done. 1. That what is here so seasonably, though not so accurately, held forth, may not onely be heedfully read, but seriously weighed, and carefully and conscientiously improv'd; that having searcht and found that so it is, that this is England's, and so any other Nation's, or people's, or person's, sole and sovereign way of being saved, we would hear it, and practically know it for our good, and as that, than which, nothing is more our own, nor the Nations interest, or concern. And 2. that as what is here dictated, I have my self sent and followed with my prayers, (and I wish I could say with*

Job 5. 27.

with my tears) into the world; so it may be accompanied also with others prayers, even the prayers of all, into whose hands it shall come. That the Lord may be pleas'd to bless and succeed the same, so as to accomplish that good work, and to effect that great and blessed cure, it tends to, and is design'd for, even to *turn us again to the Lord God of Hosts* repentingly, that so he may *turn to us* graciously, and *cause his face to shine*. And let us now (and so I shall conclude) pray, and pray again, yea and again, as the Church and people of God do here, *v. 3. Turn us again O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. v. 7. Turn us again O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. v. 19. Turn us again O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved*, and let all that love and desire their own, or the Nation's weal, say, *Amen and Amen.*

*O Lord, the God of Hosts, do thou
Turn us again to thee :
Cause thou thy face to shine on us,
And saved we shall be.*

FINIS.
